

COMPETITION



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TORONTO

COMPETITION

A STUDY IN HUMAN MOTIVE

WRITTEN FOR "THE COLLEGIUM"

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THE COLLEGIUM

AN EXPERIMENT IN THE CORPORATE STUDY
OF THE WILL OF GOD FOR MODERN LIFE

THE Collegium was called into existence to take part in satisfying the widespread desire for further light on the relation of Christianity to social life, through a fuller understanding of the social teaching of the Gospel in its application to the facts of modern life.

The Collegium is a group of persons who are concerned in various social movements and in various attempts to promote the study of social problems in the light of Christian principles. Their experience led them to desire some further means of developing a deeper insight into the social implications of Christianity in the actual situation to-day, in order to assist the solution of the social problem and so to revive the sense of the power of God in

Christ. Every age has its own particular problem, in which is to be found its own especial opportunity of reaching a deeper knowledge of Christ; for our age this opportunity is to be found in the social problem.

The governing belief of the Collegium is that the solution of this problem is impossible unless the Christian Church seeks a fuller understanding of the will of God for modern life, and that groups of people definitely united in such a search would be able in some measure to promote that understanding. The perplexity and helplessness of which so many people are conscious in face of the social problems of this country is due largely to ignorance of the facts, but far more to ignorance of the Gospel. Few, if any, would claim to know, except in outline, the relation of Christianity to social life and to the political and legislative problems of the present day. We have not yet learned all we believe the Gospel has to teach as to how the mind of Christ may permeate and control the existing social order and all the relationships of human life, though many are striving to live a life of true discipleship as individuals.

Many people are thinking and working in this direction, some within, others without, the fellowship of the Church, but hitherto there has been little of corporate spiritual effort in the search, and much of the past failure has been due to just this lack.

The Collegium believes that a sound contribution to the elucidation of the whole matter may be made by groups of people united not only in study and conference, but also in devotion and intercession. The problem is so complex that no individual can grapple with it. It is not usually possible to do much in isolation toward discovery in such matters. Perhaps it is only in union with others that the guidance of the Spirit can be fully realised. Groups of men and women, giving of their time to corporate thought and reading, investigation and prayer, may gain an understanding not otherwise obtainable. We want men and women who will try to learn in fellowship and prayer what Christ requires of His disciples here and now, and for this it is essential that they should have opportunities of being "with one accord in one place." Moreover, this discovery cannot be made merely

through the following out of an argument, but through reliance on the promise of Christ that "where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

THE AIM OF THE COLLEGIUM is to discover the true expression of the Christian ideal of membership in society; and with this object it desires :—

1. To bring together for prayer, meditation and conference, people who admit the claim of this ideal and desire help in making it real.

2. To unite in intercession those who feel the need of spiritual fellowship in social work.

3. To produce literature on social questions based on a definitely Christian conception of society. [It is intended that all literature issued by the Collegium shall be the work of corporate thought and prayer, and not merely the private work of individual authors.]

4. In these and other ways to assist as much as possible other Christian bodies concerned with the study of social problems.

MEMBERS. The bond of union between all* is the consciousness that they can pray together. The original group of four or five has been increased by co-option. The members meet for a period of prayer, intercession and conference three or four times a year : in order to secure fruitful discussion it has been found necessary that the number should be kept small. These members serve as a general committee of control. This central group, in the pursuit of all its aims, is anxious to associate with itself any who are in sympathy with its purpose and method.

With this in view it invites the co-operation as "Associates" of those who believe :—

(a) That it is momentous to the hold of Christian faith upon the modern mind that the Church should discover the true application of the spirit and doctrines of Christ to our present problems of social and national life.

(b) That this requires not only individual thinking but also an interchange of thought especially between those who have learned

the Christian faith in different schools of religious tradition and those who are seeking to live the Christian life in different ranks and callings.

(c) That this interchange of thought, whereby alone the needed discovery can be obtained, is only possible through association in prayer.

The Collegium comes to nothing unless it succeeds in winning the co-operation of individuals in every part of the country ; its work will be of little value unless it is enabled to become the focus of wide experience contributed by men and women of diverse occupations and interests. This co-operation finds expression in the following ways :—

1. CONTRIBUTION OF ASSOCIATES.

(a) Private prayer alike for the work of the Collegium and for any matter for which prayer is asked by associates.

(b) The suggestion of subjects for prayer or study, such, for example, as any problem or difficulty on social matters with which associates are confronted.

(c) Meeting together in local groups for prayer and conference.

(d) Seeking and maintaining intercourse with other associates engaged in similar work and faced by similar difficulties.

(e) Helping the central or any other group by study or investigation.

(f) Giving prominence to the cause for which the Collegium stands through influencing the Press and in other ways.

2. FACILITIES AFFORDED BY THE COLLEGIUM :—

(a) The circulation among associates of an Intercession leaflet from time to time.

(b) The attempt to assist associates in the solution of such pressing problems either of theory or practice as may perplex them.

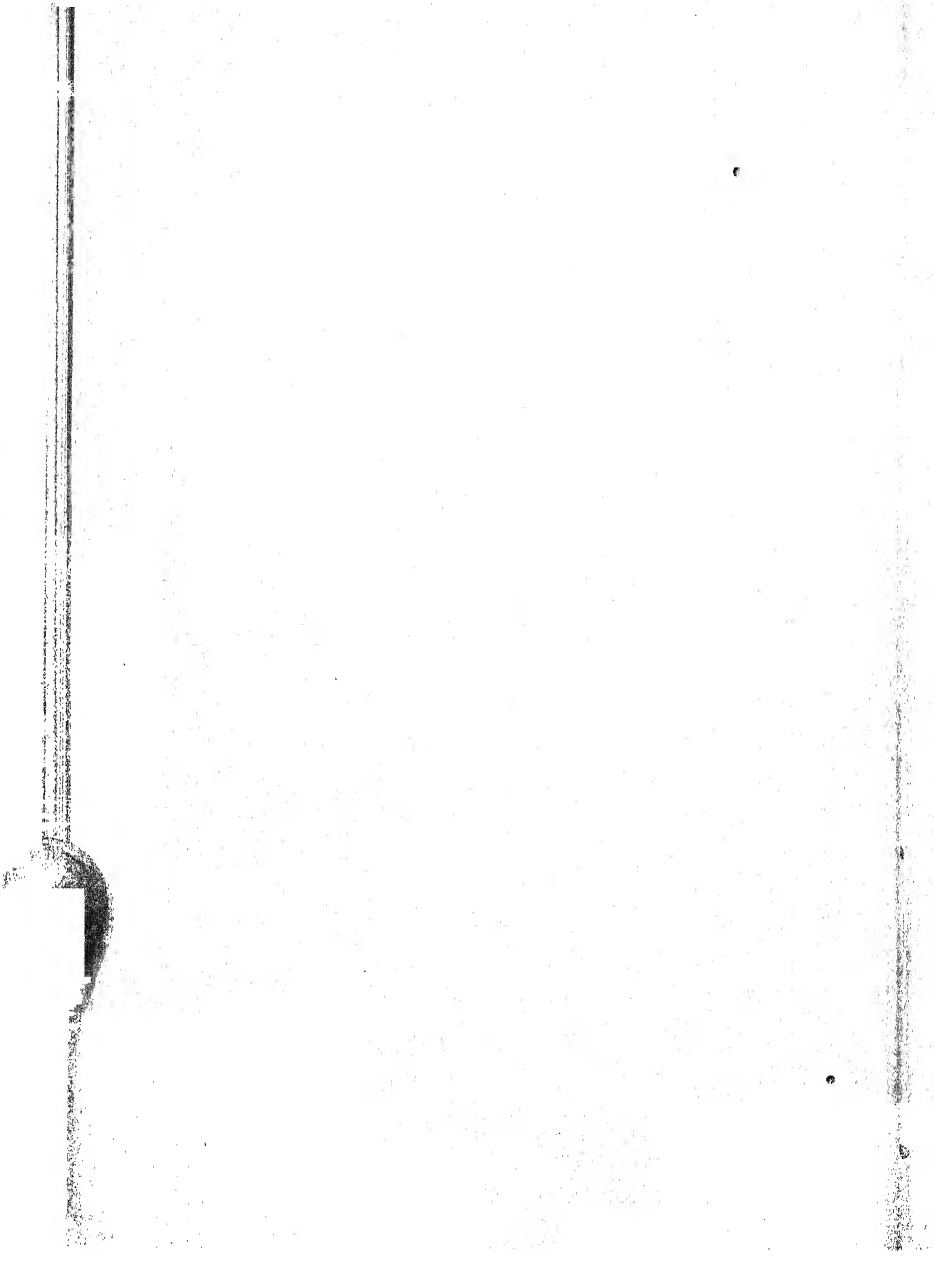
(c) The provision to associates of the names of other associates living in the same district or engaged in similar work.

(d) The provision of a centre or centres for gatherings of associates or others in the spirit of the Collegium.

THE COLLEGIUM HOUSE. In opening a house in London for its work, the Collegium has been moved by a desire to provide a centre for small retreats for prayer and conference on social questions for those who desire further light on the relation of Christianity to social life. It is used, for example, for meetings of the Council for Christian Witness on Social Questions and its Committee, for meetings of the Interdenominational Conference of Social Service Unions, and for weekly conference and prayer concerning some of the more difficult problems involved in the Women's Movement. It is hoped that the Collegium House may be used as a place where people of widely differing views may meet together for conference, and the promotion of mutual understanding.

The primary concern then of the Collegium will be the application of Christianity to social relationships, whether in personal, business, national, or international affairs. If it succeeds it will bring its own contribution to the education of the Christian conscience. It does not start upon this work with a sense that it

knows, or soon will know, the truth; but rather with the sense that, while no one knows it fully now, much may be learnt—that is, revealed—through these means, and that the Collegium may bring a new understanding of duty, and a new knowledge of the source of power.



PREFACE

THIS book is the work of the Collegium whose aims and methods are given in the preceding pages. In accordance with what is there said our method has not been that commonly followed in the production of joint volumes where chapters are written by different members and then criticised by the whole group. We have held a series of conferences lasting for a prolonged period, and our method has been to examine the whole subject until a common mind was reached. We have then asked one of the group to write the convictions to which we have been brought; this expression of the common mind has then been discussed and criticised in order to secure its adequacy. We now offer our work to the public in the hope that it may become a basis for inquiry similar in kind of that which it is the result, and also that through the criticism

which it receives a fuller understanding may be reached.

We have to thank the Rev. Will Reason for much material which has been used in the work, especially in Chapter III; and the Rev. Herbert Grey for great assistance in Chapter VIII. Most valuable help has also been given by Associates of the Collegium especially with regard to Chapter IV. Our gatherings have been held at the Collegium House, 92, St. George's Square, S.W., and our work owes much to the hospitality as well as to the stimulus and criticism of the Secretary of the Collegium, Miss Lucy Gardner, who will be glad to receive correspondence on the subject.

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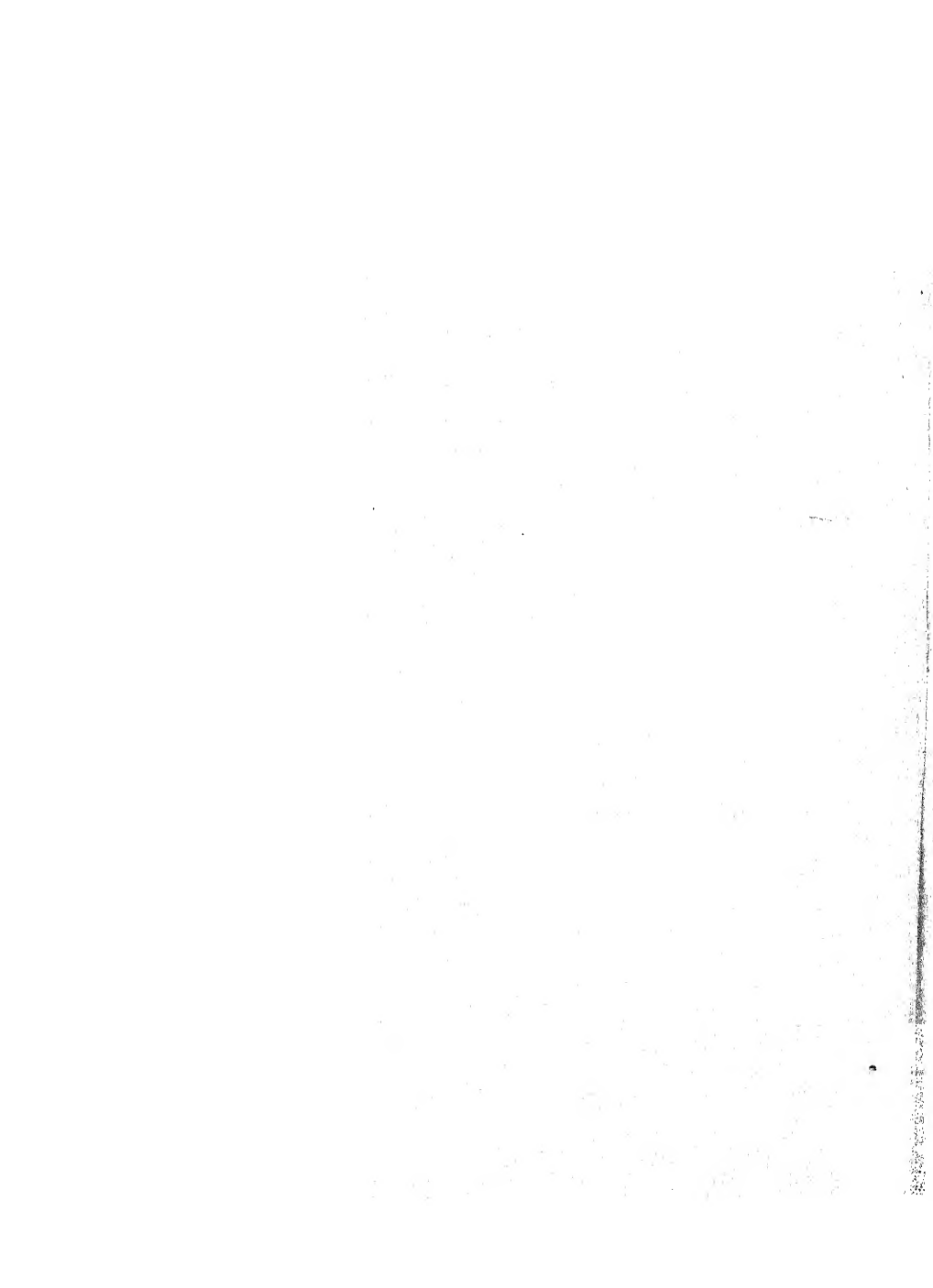
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COMPETITION



COMPETITION

CHAPTER I

COMPETITION DEFINED

THE social development of Europe has reached a point where all are agreed that it cannot possibly rest. In particular, the industrial order as we know it gives occasion for universal discontent. Men are so harassed in earning the means to live that they have no time truly to live at all. The "drive" of modern industry, whether due to competition, as is often assumed, or to other causes, leaves little peace for the enjoyment of leisure and hardly any opportunity for the craftsman's joy in perfecting his work. Moreover, the specialisation necessary to the conduct of modern business narrows and cramps the faculties, and at the same time makes the work itself uninteresting and dull; the work-

man no longer makes a whole article, with all its variety of detail and the interest of fitting the various parts of his handiwork together; he makes a minute section, endlessly repeating the same tiny process.

It is natural that industry so organised should show little concern either for the comfort or for the character of those who are engaged in it. Production and nothing else has to be considered. The relations of employer and employed tend to lose all humanity and to become a bargain in which each tries to beat the other. Labour is treated as a commodity, like land or machinery, which the owner tries to sell dear and the user tries to buy cheap; but labour differs from other commodities in that it is inseparable from its possessor, and to buy so much labour really means to buy so many labourers for so much time. The labourers are treated as "hands," which is not very far from the "living chattels" which Aristotle defined slaves to be. And the employers are hardly any more free, at least within their business; they, too, are afflicted by the rush and drive, and feel like mere cogs in a vast machine.

The dullness of work creates a lust for excitement in times of leisure ; because personality counts for so little in hours of employment, the purely individual side of it demands and obtains expression at almost any cost when employment ceases. While no one person or group of persons is especially to blame, everyone is agreed in deploring an industrial system which seems to pay no regard to the comfort and character of the people engaged in working it.

In face of this situation, it is natural that people should single out for denunciation that feature of our industrial and social organisation which is at once most conspicuous and, at first sight, most contrary to the moral ideals professedly accepted in Europe. A great deal of the driving power in modern industry comes from competition ; and those who find that this power drives them over hard very easily lay all the blame for this on competition. Moreover, when they consider the matter, they seem to find a complete and absolute antagonism between the whole principle of a competitive system and the principle of Brotherhood which is fundamental in Christianity. Is there

not an absolute incompatibility between business as we know it and Christianity? And if there is, which of the two is at fault? The discontent which is common in our time is not a mere complaint against the hardness of life, it is a profound uneasiness of conscience with regard to the very mainspring of modern industry.

Others would urge that the competitive struggle is indispensable to the well-being of the community; any condition of affairs which leaves any room for individual enterprise must give rise to rivalry; the alternative to a competitive system is the stagnation of a non-progressive system, which would be just as deleterious to character and far less advantageous economically. If at the moment the stress of competition is excessive, let the State step in to mitigate the pressure, as it has already done in Factory Legislation and the like. But competition as the basal principle of the industrial order is both necessary and desirable; desirable because it keeps men eager to adopt improvements whereby they may gain a wider market, and necessary because men will always compete with one

-another to secure the more attractive kinds of work and to avoid the least attractive. Those who succeed in this will always be regarded as successful people, and society will therefore always be competitively graded. If, however, competition cannot be removed, it is mere sentimental weakness to rail at it. Even the Christian has no need to trouble his conscience about the system itself, but only about his personal duty in his corner of it. The world is full of evil things, from tooth-aches to earthquakes, which he cannot control ; he has to live out his life under these conditions and use them for the manifestation of his Christian spirit.

Now if views so diverse can be conscientiously held with regard to a subject so important, it seems that an inquiry into the social and industrial order may well begin with an attempt to determine how far the contemporary evils which all deplore are due to competition or to other factors in the situation, and if to competition, then whether to any special form of it or to the general principle itself. Again we need to inquire whether the advantages asserted to be gained

by it are obtainable through it alone, or might be retained even though the struggle for either existence or position were modified or indeed abolished. But before this inquiry can be undertaken we must try to fix the meaning of our terms. What precisely is competition? And to what extent is our present system purely or predominantly competitive?

Competition is one of those vague terms which are very freely used in all discussion of social subjects; it conveys some meaning to all who utter or hear it; but this meaning as a rule is undefined, and therefore inconstant; the word has different suggestions for different people. Some regard what they call competition as the source of all initiative, enterprise, and progress; some think the word expresses a principle of selfishness, cruelty, and social disruption. It is possible that the two groups of people have formed these utterly divergent estimates of the same fact; but that is, in itself, improbable. It seems more likely that, while the word has no doubt a central core of meaning which remains constant, its application is extended variously, in this direction and in that, by the different

people who utter it. Before there can be any really clear thinking about the nature of competition or the right place of the various motives and activities called competitive, the meaning of the term itself must be fixed, and some criterion established by which such questions may be judged.

There appear to be three, and only three, primary relations in which a man as agent may stand to other men ; he may ignore them, or compete with them, or co-operate with them. These three may be mingled together in various proportions, or they may exist in isolation. A man who is hungry, if his whole being is occupied by his hunger, may beg, borrow, or steal food to satisfy it ; he is so far not thinking of other people at all, and, if he satisfies his hunger with hedgehogs caught in a wood, he is neither competing with others nor co-operating with them ; his action does not of necessity bring him into any relation with them at all. But it is clear that only a tiny fraction of civilised man's life can be conducted in this way, and that, so far as a man lives in this way, he is not a member of society or a citizen at all. All a man's

social acts are bound to be competitive or co-operative, or both the one and the other, in different relations, though of course the man himself may be quite ignorant of this fact.

This gives us the limits of our general field of inquiry. We wish, so far as we may be able, to determine the various shapes which "competition" may take, alike in industry and elsewhere, how far it is a necessary stimulus to progress, and how it is related to the Christian doctrine of men and society.

Competition arises whenever men strive for identical objects which cannot be possessed in common. Indeed, the act of such striving is the very essence of competition. There is competition, for instance, in the effort to obtain the first place; but there is no competition in the effort to attain perfection, as, for example, in the sphere of great art, or in what we may call, in a similar phrase, great business; for the attainment of perfection by one does not make it more difficult for others. But if there is only a limited market for their goods, artists who aim only at excellence, and not at superiority to other artists, may find

themselves competing for that market without any desire to do so. In this case, to achieve supreme excellence and to be successful in competing for public favour may easily be incompatible, and the economic necessity of doing the latter may ruin all hope of success in the former. We all know, for instance, that Handel's genius—perhaps the equal of Bach's in original endowment—was largely spoilt by his need of securing support from the British public, which (like Dr. Johnson) could not distinguish between Handel and Bononcini; in this case the great artist had to abandon the effort after perfection in order to compete in a limited market with a man whose name is only known to-day because of the greatness of his antagonist.

And if such an occurrence is possible in art, it is of necessity frequent in business, where the impulse to the effort for perfection is less and the need to hold some part at least of the market is greater, and where the achievement of perfection, or the approach to it, is almost bound to displace from the market other less excellent goods (unless the price of the perfect article is prohibitive), and thus

involves competition indirectly. Most people, no doubt, would say that the competition in this latter case is plainly a good thing, while in the other case, where good work is degraded to the level of bad, it is a bad thing. We are, however, not yet discussing values, but only what competition is and how it arises. And perhaps enough has been said to substantiate the definition—Competition is the act of striving for identical objects which cannot be possessed or enjoyed in common—and also to show that this competition may be either Deliberate or Involuntary.

(1) *Deliberate Competition* is the act of striving with other people in order to

- (a) do something better,
- (b) be thought more of,
- (c) obtain more power,
- (d) possess more material wealth

than those other people.

This classification may be grouped as follows: (a) and (b) represent the attempt to acquire skill and reputation, while (c) and (d) represent the attempt to acquire power and wealth. It should be noticed that the effort to acquire any of these *at the cost of* another

is in motive and effect indistinguishable from the effort to acquire *more than* that other.

(a) This type of *deliberate competition* is most clearly seen in games, and we may assume at once that in games it is entirely justified. The essence of a game is that winning or losing has no consequences—and this is why betting and gambling are the perdition of sport; the thing which the player tries to do is a thing which there is no imaginable reason for doing, except that one enjoys doing it.

In many games, though not in all, there is no pleasure in doing what is aimed at apart from the attempt of the opponent or opposing side to prevent one from doing it. Merely to kick a ball through a goal, for example, is poor sport; and though there is a special pleasure in making a really good stroke, the stroke is a good one because it beats the opponent. At golf we find the joy of pure skill almost isolated; but even there the player is pitting himself against the course, with its bunkers and so forth, and is competing with "bogey" or with his own best previous performance. So, speaking broadly, we may

say that in games the pleasure comes from the competition itself ; indeed, a good sportsman would rather be beaten in an even contest than win with a walk-over, which proves that the bulk of the pleasure comes from the act of competing, and not from success, though, of course, success adds to the pleasure. There is therefore in human nature an instinct of pure competition which finds satisfaction in the very act of striving to do something better than other people, even though the attempt is not successful. Moreover, no one doubts that this sort of rivalry is thoroughly healthy. The vividness with which Englishmen have grasped this truth has led them to extend to other departments of life the conceptions which are really appropriate only in relation to sport. It may assist clearness of exposition if we interrupt the description of the various types of competition at this point with some criticisms of the habit of mind which thinks that to "play the game" is an adequate rule of life, or finds in that phrase the expression of all practical morality.

First and foremost stands the consideration

already mentioned, that competition in games is for an object whose realisation is its own end. The excitement of a keen match is admittedly healthy ; the excitement of the gambler who has staked his whole livelihood is morbid. The value of competition in sport is no evidence of its usefulness in industry, where, in the struggle between Labour and Capital, the stake for the capitalist is great, but the stake for the labourer is nothing less than the right to eat his bread as a free man ; and where, in the struggle between similars, the capitalist may lose his social status through loss of profits, or the working-man may lose his home and independence through unemployment.

Again, the issue in a game is decided in a comparatively short space of time. To live with the hope of immediate success and fear of immediate failure in an enterprise which has no significance beyond itself is a totally different thing from living permanently on the brink of that abyss into which competitive industry throws its failures. This latter fear is not a stimulant ; it is a narcotic. Even the satisfaction of winning is denied to the

successful industrial competitor, unless he has stifled his imagination and drugged his sympathies. A good-hearted fellow will get great satisfaction from beating another at tennis or billiards, or from pommelling him in a boxing match ; but he will get no satisfaction out of driving an opponent from the market and ruining him ; he may be glad to get the market himself, but this satisfaction has nothing to do with driving out the competitor, which is only an incidental, indeed a regrettable, preliminary.

It is easy to think of other instances taken from the non-business world. A preacher may aim at being the best preacher in a town ; but this is evil precisely in so far as he thinks about preaching better than others instead of thinking about preaching as usefully as he can. The defeat of the unsuccessful has nothing to do with the real value of success. Or a man may aim at being the most popular novelist of his time ; in the degree that he succeeds he will tend to hold the market and make matters difficult for struggling writers ; but that is no part of his satisfaction. The desire to excel in the serious affairs of life will

always win its satisfaction at some real cost to others, unless all men become perfectly altruistic.

But we must proceed with our description of the main types of competitive motive.

(b) *Deliberate competition* with a view to one man being thought more of than another is a slightly less honourable type than the desire actually to excel which we have been considering. It undoubtedly plays a great part in life, and is allied to genuine aspiration in much the same way as jealousy is allied to love; it is the self-regarding side of it.

(c) *Deliberate competition* with a view to acquiring more power than other people—that is to say, more control of the means of production or of other men's activities—is probably the commonest and strongest force of all the four types. What the selfish side of our nature values most is just the sense of power over other people. We see it at its purest and worst in Iago. The one thing to which many employers and others in a position of control seem to cling is their right to order people about; a man may do this benevolently or heedlessly or cruelly, but he usually likes

doing it. This motive of competition may be less direct: what is aimed at may be rather the sense of possessing "influence," *e.g.* of controlling legislation through subscription to the party funds. The desire to be "important" is inevitably competitive; it is not possible that everyone should be "important," because

When everyone is somebody
Then no one's anybody.

The desire to have the last word, or to control any assembly, whether as chairman or as predominant member, or in general to "boss the show," leads to competition of this kind, which is also involved in "Mrs. Gooch's Golden Rule, or the Divine Injunction 'Be ye perfect' done into British"—the sentence Sir Daniel Gooch's mother repeated to him every morning when he was a boy going to work: "Ever remember, my dear Dan, that you should look forward to being some day manager of that concern."¹

(d) *Deliberate competition* with a view to possessing more material wealth than other

¹ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 41.

people is, perhaps, the rarest of all. Morally and spiritually it is usually a sub-form of competition for reputation or for power; the wealth is wanted, as a rule, either for ostentation or for the power it gives. If it is only wanted for the enjoyment that can be obtained from it, deliberate competition need not come in at all, though it often does. What is then wanted is merely all that one can get, without any regard to what is possessed by other people.

Such seem to be the main forms of deliberate competition; and we cannot be surprised that they play a great part in life when it is remembered that we are deliberately subjected to the competitive stimulus from our earliest years.

This stimulus is employed in the nursery; it is the chief inducement to industry all through our school-days; the whole examination system tends in the same direction, for people feel as though they were competing even when the examination is of the merely "qualifying" order. All scholarships and other educational prizes are awarded on a competitive basis, with the result that many boys

and girls have to compete even for the opportunity of developing their faculties.

What wonder then that competition seems to many people to be the one and only stimulus to enterprise? It is almost, if not quite, the only stimulus which has been consciously and deliberately applied to them. But when we reflect that a vast amount of the best work done in the world is done without any regard to the amount of the remuneration, which, as a matter of fact, is often very small, we begin to see that there must be other motives in ordinary humanity, besides the competitive and acquisitive, that are at least equally strong. But motives develop in controlling power in proportion as they are appealed to; and if the competitive and acquisitive impulses are the strongest in average European human nature to-day, this supplies no ground for supposing that others might not be equally powerful if appeal were made to them with equal frequency.

(2) *Involuntary Competition* is the act of striving for identical objects which cannot be possessed or enjoyed in common, but striving solely for the sake of the object and not with

reference, conscious or unconscious, to the other people concerned. We have already seen how such competition may arise. Indeed, it is very difficult for a man to do anything in the world at all without finding that he is competing in some way with somebody. The artist who wants to sell a picture, which he painted with no thought of anything except its beauty, is, in fact, competing with others who may have painted with the same aims, or who may have painted only to make money. If he does not sell his pictures, but presents them to the nation, like G. F. Watts, he is creating a standard in comparison with which many other artists must appear less noble and disinterested, merely because they cannot afford to imitate him.

This, perhaps as much as anything else, is what people mean when they speak of the competitive system: the whole system in which we live is competitive, because it is so organised that, whatever we do, and whether we wish it or not, we are involved in competition with somebody.

Now at first sight it appears that the competitive instinct, except as it works in

games and other spheres where the competitors agree to compete for the mere fun or interest of the competition itself, is opposed to the Christian ideal. For the motive of deliberate competition at least is self-regarding, and the Christian is called upon to "ignore himself." Broadly speaking, human motives may be divided into three classes: those which are selfish in the strict sense—which aim, that is, at a personal advantage gained at other people's cost; those which are self-regarding, though not selfish—such as self-respect or the desire to cultivate artistic gifts; and those of service or vocation—such as, in many cases, that of the teacher, doctor, missionary, or nurse. No doubt the great majority of our actions are due to motives of all classes. But it is apparent that Christianity appeals always to the motives of service or vocation, while competition appeals to the self-centred motives, and of these to the selfish more than to the self-regarding.

And the opposition seems to be quite as deep, though not so obvious, in the case of involuntary competition, in so far at any rate as this is due to alterable parts of the social

system. For the social system has its roots in the beliefs—conscious or unconscious—of the citizens, and reproduces in successive generations the beliefs to which it owes its origin and preservation. For this reason the true test of the value of a social system is not its stability, nor its power of making the citizens contented, but its effect on their characters. A system therefore which involves men in competition, even in cases where this is avoidable, and that, too, whether they like it or not, must be rooted in a belief, perhaps only half-conscious, in the excellence of competition (a belief which at first sight appears unchristian), and must also be imposing that belief upon those who grow up under its influence, and developing the emulative and acquisitive impulses in their natures.

The present social order, like any other civilisation, owes its peculiar character primarily to the action of human will and human purpose acting upon its environment, which in turn reacts upon human wills.

From the human point of view the two chief motives which lie behind the present system of production are (a) the competitive motive,

i.e. the desire to do better, to be thought more of, to get more power, or more money, than other people, in fact, what we have called deliberate competition; and (b) the desire for material goods, for comforts, and for luxuries, and the desire to be set free from the struggle for existence. This second motive is probably stronger and more powerful than the first. The vast majority of people struggle and strive, not to get more material things than other people, but to get as much as they can for themselves and their families. As the supply of material goods is limited, it follows that if some get more, others get less; but the motive that leads people to work hard is in innumerable cases the desire for material things, and it is quite without any desire on their part that they are forced into competition with their neighbours. It is to be noticed that no state of society could be devised in which there was no involuntary competition. It could only be reduced to a minimum on the inconceivable hypothesis of everyone accepting exactly the same remuneration and by making all men equal in every respect. The only possible line of reform in connection with this

second motive is, not to attempt the abolition of involuntary competition, but to establish some standard of value with regard to material things, to replace the greed for material objects with a passion for spiritual welfare.

In the whole moral environment provided by our civilisation involuntary competition easily becomes deliberate. Finding himself engaged in the struggle, a man easily begins to concentrate attention on the struggle itself. For this, as for the pressure of the struggle, there is no remedy in mere reform of the machinery of society. Any form of organised life must be in large measure competitive. Change in the outward act can only come from a change of heart. The real evil is not competition itself, but the spirit of acquisitiveness and the acceptance of individual rather than social standards of success. While men aim at acquisition first and at service only incidentally or not at all, the evils of competition will continue: if ever they make efficiency in service their first aim, competition will play its part in sorting men according to capacity, without producing abject failure, bitterness, or despair.

At this point the question may reasonably be asked whether it is even conceivable that the motive of service can ever be so strong as to get the work of the world done. This question concerns us very specially in this book, which is content to examine for the most part industrial production only. But there is reason to believe that similar results as regards energy and efficiency could be reached by appeals to other sides of human nature if these were made constantly from childhood onwards. A motive is strengthened when appeal is made to it, and whereas our present system thus develops the emulative instincts until it seems hopeless to appeal to others, a different system, which put less pressure on men, might give opportunity and stimulus to the development of other motives ; some of these would be self-regarding, such as the Joy of Work, which is familiar to all who have freedom to perfect their productions, while some would be altruistic, such as the Joy of Service. With the former Christianity has no quarrel ; the latter is of its own substance.

Our inquiry will pursue the following lines : it will first deal with our present system,

attempting in Chapters II and III to determine how it arose, how far it is successful from the purely economic point of view, and how far it can be said to put the right people in the right place. In Chapter IV the effects of the present system on character will be considered. In Chapter V the possibility of remedying these evils by the methods of social reform will be discussed, in the hope of seeing whether the crushing and deadening influences of our system could not be removed without destroying what now gives life its zest. Chapter VI will discuss drastic changes in the social fabric. In Chapter VII we shall try to show that, while such reform may be beneficial in its degree, the real moral problem involved will remain untouched, namely, that men will still be actuated chiefly by the influences of fear and need rather than by joy in work or desire to serve. In Chapter VIII we shall turn to the argument that life is being robbed of zest and interest, and in answer it will be shown that there is a place for real emulation in the Christian character, and that a Christian society will only save men from the fear of falling singly into the abyss of want in order that they may

unite in the corporate adventure of the Kingdom of God. And so our last two chapters will take up the need for a change of heart which will have then emerged as the pivot of the whole matter, and for which we must look partly to education and partly to efforts and experiments conducted in the spirit of adventure.

CHAPTER II

MODERN INDUSTRY : CHARACTERISTICS AND ORIGINS

THE inquiry on which we are engaged found its starting-point in the widespread feelings of mental and moral discomfort occasioned by the drive of modern industry. To-day we hear constant complaints of the pressure of competition—a pressure which is generally supposed to have grown in intensity during the last generation. To gauge the justice of such complaints it will be necessary to check our vague impressions by a somewhat fuller account of the characteristics and origins of modern industry.

The conditions under which wealth is now produced are manifestly determined in large measure by the application of steam and electricity to industrial ends. The distinguishing features of the world's work at the present

time must be traced to this development in technical science, a development which, in the case of electricity at least, is not yet complete. The remarkable inventions of the closing decades of the eighteenth century initiated a period of industrial revolution in which the processes of spinning and weaving were completely changed by machinery and steam-power. The nineteenth century witnessed an extraordinary development in the means of transport through the railway and the steamship, while the subsequent introduction of the telegraph and the telephone have transformed latter-day business methods.¹ For us the most significant feature of scientific progress in the economic world has been the creation of ever more rapid means of communi-

¹ Some important dates in the Industrial Revolution :

1769. James Watt patents the first steam-engine.

1770. Hargreaves patents the spinning-jenny (starts the revolution in spinning).

1785. Cartwright's power-loom invented (begins the use of machinery in weaving).

1786. First steamship.

1825. Stephenson's railway from Stockton to Darlington opened.

1839. Penny postage.

1872. Edison perfects duplex telegraphy.

1876. Bell invents a telephone.

cation. Large-scale production in the factory system has been rendered possible, first of all by the use of steam-driven machinery, and secondly by the development of means of transport and communication which offer to the producer an ever wider market and bring him into touch with fresh sources of supply. The railway and the steamship, the telegraph and the telephone, the post and the modern press, and, not least, the development of modern credit facilities, make greater centralisation possible and render local seclusion difficult. In many branches of production and distribution the advantages lie with the larger organisation, and men of capacity can direct a much greater volume of business than their predecessors were able to do. The grocer or the draper in the little country town finds his practical monopoly invaded by the competition either of the branch of some large firm, or of some fashionable shopping centre, brought within reach of his customers by train, tram, or post. This widening of markets underlies many of the complaints of increased competition, especially among those classes of the community of which the small shopkeepers

are representative. However, the disquieting effects of these changes are not confined to the smaller men, who previously enjoyed local advantages. The extension of markets brings the bigger men into fuller competition with one another. In particular, international rivalry in industry has intensified. A commonplace observation constantly reminds us that the world has grown smaller. The search for new markets and for fresh supplies of raw material—a search rendered necessary by the ever fuller and more rapid utilisation of existing forces—prompts and dominates the efforts and rivalries of international diplomacy. While it is a mistake to suppose that all political issues are at bottom economic, there is no doubt that economic interests demand an ever-growing share of diplomatic attention. The wish to secure for one's own countrymen the monopoly of financial and industrial advantage in the development of some backward country is a determining factor in the activities of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in every modern State.¹

¹ On this whole subject, consult H. N. Brailsford, "War of Steel and Gold," and W. M. Fullerton, "Problems of Power."

In general, we may claim that the eagerness to obtain security through monopoly, whether by voluntary association and combination or by the manipulation of tariffs and the fostering of imperialism, provides a fair index of the intensity of competition under modern conditions.

The widening of markets results from a scientific advance which involves a quickening of the pace in the industrial world. Both physically and psychologically business moves faster than ever before, and appears to be subjected to a continuous acceleration. Business transactions, with the help of the telephone, are more rapidly decided, and are in consequence multiplied. Above all, new developments are more speedily and more generally exploited. Changes are more frequent, and their effects are both more rapidly and more widely diffused. This quickening of the pace conditions the modern competitive struggle. Those who cannot readily adapt themselves to constant change find their position very hard. Old methods, antiquated forms of skill, receive but short shrift. The modern labourer has been compared to a

soldier fighting at his own charges and never knowing when he will be shot down." The reaction of modern industry on the position of the worker has been intensified in England by previous historical circumstances. In particular, the enclosure movements of the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries helped to create a proletariat in the technical sense of the term, *i.e.* a class of workers dependent on others for employment, and with no economic resource when thrown out of work. But for the enclosure movements, the sense of insecurity in the ranks of labour would not be as great as it is, though the rapidity of change characteristic of modern industry was bound to produce a considerable effect of this kind.¹ In the long run we may hope the good of society is promoted, but this is small consolation for the unfortunate individuals, or groups of individuals, who cannot keep going for the long run. For the less successful among those who are their own masters competition under modern conditions involves harder work, meaner economies, a growing temptation to

¹ For the first enclosure movement see R. H. Tawney, "The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century."

petty sharp practice, a narrowed and embittered outlook. On the more successful the pace tells in an increased anxiety to get rich and secure one's position quickly. The very volume of business which a capable man is expected to transact is so considerable that his powers are subjected to an increasing strain, the effects of which may be traced perhaps in the prevalence of rest cures. In any case, opportunities have to be seized without delay, and advantages pushed to the full as rapidly as may be. The man who discovers a good thing in business must make the most of it, as it is doubtful how long it will remain a good thing. The quickening of the pace means instability of position both for individuals and for firms, and leads to more ruthless insistence on the famous maxim: "Business is business."

This tendency is reinforced for some, though it may be modified for others, by the increase in size of the typical business organisation of to-day. Though the extent to which large-scale production prevails, or is destined to prevail, is sometimes exaggerated, yet the modern factory and the modern store do re-

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quire greater initial capital and greater directing ability than were required in earlier days. In many parts of the industrial world a business must reach a certain size, and must be maintained on a certain scale, before it can hope to succeed. A new business, in coming to the front, must be a hard fighter. On the other hand, the well-organised firm secures a breathing space. It usually enjoys at least a temporary element of monopoly, and where the normal scale of organisation reduces the number of competing firms, possibilities of grouping become obvious and are readily seized. Thus the size of the typical business unit of to-day tends to heighten the struggle for some, and to reduce the pressure of competition for others, at least for a time. In the absence of any element of monopoly the margin between success and failure is a narrow one, and the head of a business which is working on that margin is almost compelled to be a hard bargainer, and can give little attention to any other than purely economic considerations.

The elaborate and complicated processes by which we produce wealth now, involving as

they' do the co-operation and co-ordination of many specialised activities, tend to strengthen the influence of competition in the same direction. Modern industrial organisation in its most characteristic form leads to a diffused sense of responsibility. The soullessness of the joint-stock company has passed into a proverb. Responsibility is shared by the directors, the managers, and the shareholders, and it is fully recognised by none of them. It is notoriously difficult, even for a well-intentioned shareholder, to think of anything beyond dividends in connection with the business for which he is responsible. The directors and managers play Spenlow to the Jorkins of the shareholders, while the shareholders believe themselves to be Spenlows, who are obliged to accept the direction of Jorkins. The human links between employers and employed have worn thin where they have not snapped. There is a consequent heightening of the element of hardness and of strict attention to business. Business becomes a thing apart, conducted in accord with principles of its own from which moral and human considerations are apt to be

excluded. The broader social effects on work and character, the opportunities provided for scamped work and dishonesty, the tendency to standardise work, to substitute that which will just pass muster in material and in workmanship for that which is best, the resultant inequalities in wealth, and the accentuation of class antagonism, fall to be considered in a later chapter. Here we have only to note that one main reason why the problem of competition presses more and more on the mind of the modern man is to be found in the quickened pace of our industrial life, a speeding up, which in turn rests upon the progress of mechanical science.

So far we have attributed the distinguishing features of modern industry to changes in the technique of production. We must never forget, however, that the social effects of these changes are morally conditioned. The reaction of mechanical inventions on society depends on the character and beliefs of the men who make and apply these discoveries. The nineteenth century reveals the final triumph of a new spirit and temper in the business world. Modern industry is character-

ised by liberty of movement and freedom of enterprise. We may not unfairly regard freedom of enterprise as the spirit of capitalism, and we must not trace it as an effect to the changes in the methods of production which we have just been considering. The germs of this new spirit were in existence before the Industrial Revolution, and its growth gave a special character to the social effects of the changes in mechanism. The earlier system of national control and protection exercised through Guilds and Companies had already broken down when the development of steam-power began to transform industry. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Privy Council retained a control over industry and commerce which was seriously impaired by the Civil War, and was never recovered at the Restoration. The well-ordered trade of the seventeenth century gave way to the claims of the independent merchant and producer.¹ When England entered on the period of industrial revolution the spirit of enterprise and the belief in individual free-

¹ See Cunningham, "Growth of English Industry and Commerce," vol. ii. sec. 242, p. 611, ed. 1903.

dom, *i.e.* in the right to the unhampered pursuit of self-interest, were already widespread and in a large measure established.

The origins of this new temper root back in the period of the Reformation. Both Renaissance and Reformation united to create it. The recognition of the validity of interest in the teaching of Calvin laid one of the foundations of capitalism. The beginnings of the new spirit may be followed in seventeenth-century England in the protests against industrial and trading monopolies and privileges held on the guarantee of the State. The attitude of the Commons towards monopolies in the reigns of Elizabeth and the first two Stuarts is well worth study. Men were growingly conscious of the social injustice and economic wastefulness associated with these State-guaranteed privileges. And naturally the full consequences of the new outlook were not experienced at once. The administration of Cromwell affords an interesting illustration of a fluctuating and limited adherence to a freer industrial system. In 1650 a Commission was appointed to inquire into and report upon the state of trade. The ninth instruction

addressed to that Commission runs as follows :

"They are to take into their consideration whether it be necessary to give way to a more open and free trade than that of Companies and Societies, and in what manner it is fittest to be done ; wherein notwithstanding, they are to take care that Government and Order in Trade be preserved, and Confusion avoided."

Here we have combined the desire for greater freedom and jealousy for national welfare.

In the same year we may note that after much discussion an Act was passed incorporating a company of worsted weavers in the city of Norwich for the making of Norwich stuffs with all the powers of a City Company.

Thus Cromwell's administration shows us a serious attempt to retain national control of industry while securing fuller play for the spirit of enterprise. The succeeding century shows a growing distrust of the interference of the State in the realm of industry.¹

In economic theory the new spirit found its classical exponent in Adam Smith. He claimed that by a pre-established harmony of divine appointment the public welfare would be best

¹ Inderwicke, "The Interregnum," pp. 75 and 79.

promoted if each individual were left as free as possible to pursue his own interest. Permit each man to follow what trade he please, and to practise it where he please, and a natural tendency would ensure that his private likings issued in public benefits. The motto *Laissez faire, laissez aller*, simply embodied the demand for liberty of action and movement for the producer which would enable him to devote himself to the work that was most profitable to himself because most needed by his fellows. What was true of individuals held good of nations. Under free trade each nation would tend to specialise on the lines of production for which it was best suited, to the economic gain of itself and to the advantage of mankind. Adam Smith's exposition of this principle formed the creed of the British business world, and the word "creed" is used advisedly, for the economic freedom of the individual seemed to belong at once to natural law and divine order. "The individual in seeking his own gain is led by an invisible hand to promote the social good, although this was no part of his intention."¹ Before the onset of this

¹ Reference to Adam Smith.

new faith, old restrictions on labour and commerce fell away. Adam Smith himself can hardly have anticipated the results of the new freedom as they were shaped by the Industrial Revolution. "Smith's views must be judged in the light of two general facts, (1) that he was leading a reaction against excessive regulation, and (2) that the form of industry in his time was itself so individualistic. It was still the day of the individual manufacturer and the small unit; to ask for freedom at that time was practically to ask for independent competition."¹ *Laissez faire* in general may be described as a creed which was first developed in the interests of small men and then exploited in the interests of big men.

The economic faith of Adam Smith itself presupposes a particular moral and religious standpoint. Max Weber is justified in tracing the spirit of capitalism to Protestant ethics. One effect of the Reformation was to emphasise the idea of calling in relation to daily work. Particularly to the conscientious Puritan, business became a sacred office, in which it was his

¹ See Hastings, E.R.E. Art. "Laissez Faire," by D. H. Macgregor.

duty to make the most of himself *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. Wesley took up this teaching and carried it further. There is a remarkable passage in one of his sermons in which he stresses the duty of innovation in industry: "Gain all you can by common-sense, by using in your business all the understanding God has given you. It is amazing to observe how few do this: how men run on in the same dull track with their forefathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon *them*, in whatever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning from the experience of others or from your own experience, reading, and reflection, to do everything you have to do better to-day than you did yesterday. And see that you practise whatever you learn, that you make the best of all that is in your hand."¹ Here Wesley inculcates as a part of the Christian religion the alertness which has created, and continues to characterise, modern industry. We must not

¹ See further, "Property: its Rights and Duties," pp. 151, 152, and for the whole setting of this teaching of Wesley's read Henry Carter's "The Methodist."

suppose that religion is being turned into a specious covering for the natural instinct of gain. A genuine religious impulse and an undoubted moral conviction, both originating with Puritanism and renewed in Methodism, helped to produce and promote the temper which demanded economic freedom. To recognise the part played by the religious and moral factors, we have only to read without prejudice Dr. Smiles's "Self-Help," which has rightly been described as one of the books that made the nineteenth century.

To-day, it must be confessed, the religious and moral elements in the temper of modern industry are neither so conscious nor so strong as they were. The sense of vocation has been largely lost. The economic defence of freedom of enterprise tended to liberate selfish ambition and love of wealth from the guidance and restraint of religious conviction. The pursuit of one's own interest escapes restraint when one is assured that thereby the common weal is promoted. The increased production of wealth enhanced the glamour of riches. The growth of the factory system offered vast possibilities

of wealth to the man of initiative and organising ability who could bring together large bodies of people into these factories. With the system once in being, such business virtues as punctuality and diligence are maintained by the spur of necessity rather than by an independent spiritual conviction. It is curious to note that the advices contained in the "Friends' Book of Discipline" with reference to worldly affairs emphasise just those points of prudence which must be observed by any successful man of business. Originally, a religious faith inspired the practice of the business virtues. To-day, common-sense, supported by the wish to succeed or the fear of failure, suffices to keep these virtues in being.

It cannot be denied, then, that a rising standard of comfort, if not an increased love of riches, intensifies the pressure of competition in the modern world, but, for all that, such intensification is to be traced primarily to the advance in science, especially in the development of rapid means of communication, and to the belief in freedom of enterprise and its influence on public policy. The mechanical inventions we could not undo

if we would, and freedom of enterprise we would not destroy if we could. The intense competition that has resulted seems to be necessary alike for the maintenance of production and the strengthening of character. How far this is true we shall consider in the chapters that follow. In concluding this section of our inquiry, we would emphasise the fact that modern industry reposes on a profound moral and religious change, a change which Protestants, at least, will feel contained many elements of advance. If, then, the social results of our present system are far from yielding us moral satisfaction, we may conjecture that we are face to face with a defect which can only be remedied by a further growth of religious faith and insight. Nothing but a new Reformation can deliver us from the evils of capitalism.

CHAPTER III

COMPETITION AND PRODUCTION

THE most extreme Socialist will not deny the actual services of Capitalism in securing a great increase of wealth. There is, indeed, a passage in Karl Marx in which he acknowledges the contribution of capitalism to progress. The remote corners of the earth have been ransacked for treasure. Immense natural resources have been laid under contribution. The world is full of restless activities and many inventions. A vast aggregate of wealth has been heaped up. Analysis reveals that the element of competition makes no small contribution to the development and maintenance of this huge mass of production.

Competition has been described as "the legalised form of the struggle for annihilation in modern life." The competitive struggle is made up of "the efforts of individuals engaged

in the same line of activity, each to benefit himself, generally at the other's expense."¹ If, then, we ask, Why is this struggle legalised? we discover its recognition as a mainspring of civilised life to be bound up with the assumption that "it tends to benefit an indefinite number of third parties, and thus becomes a means of collective economy of force and of general benefit to society." Indeed, this benefit to society at large lies in its very nature, for the essence of business competition is that one individual seeks to supplant or annihilate another "by rendering increased service to outside parties." In short, competition constitutionally involves the increase of production.

The *prima facie* evidence for this is indisputable. The struggle to improve or retain one's position in the business world does actually compel men to work very hard. Without this urgent necessity men would never discover the real extent of their productive powers. The old proverb, "You never know what you can do till you try," is verified amply

¹ Professor Hadley, Art. "Competition," Baldwin's "Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology."

in industry. Young fellows usually find they can do more than they ever thought they could, when they are compelled to do a certain amount. They make the discovery under the spur of competitive driving. Competition sometimes goads men into their utmost efforts by holding out ultimate threats—bankruptcy and starvation. In this way the legalised struggle directly affects and augments the quantity of work done. The community is thus educated into rational egoism. It is recognised by all that hard work is the only passport to genuine success, and that a man must be prepared as his first duty to give as much as he possibly can in service to his fellows. The creation of this general atmosphere stimulates production.

Competition does not merely force men to do their utmost quantitatively, but it makes it their interest to produce as efficiently and economically as possible. Vigilance against wasteful methods of production, and keenness to try to introduce new methods, are developed to their highest point under this powerful stimulus. The progressive improvement of the

productive powers of society is thus seen to be vitally connected with competition.

Another primary advantage which economists assign to competition may be considered here, though at first sight it seems to be concerned with production only in an indirect manner. The competitive struggle, it is claimed, is the best regulator of prices. Apart from competition, prices will be fixed either by custom or public authority, or by the caprice of the monopolist. The advantage of the competitive method over these alternatives largely turns on the assumption that greater individual liberty in the realm of demand is secured by the free play of competitive forces. Neither custom nor public authority can fix prices without stereotyping them. Demand can vary more freely and progress more rapidly if prices are left to be determined by the interaction of individual desires and efforts in the open market. The principle of letting each man make what he pleases, and of letting each man so far as possible frame his own demands, leads to the greatest conceivable variety and complexity in human industry

and human wants. Competition thus leads to the maintenance of the maximum personal liberty.

In yet another indirect way competition contributes to the maintenance of high productive power. The placing of the right person in the right position is obviously a most important factor in social well-being. As far as possible each man should be set to the task he can do best, leaving other tasks to those who can find their best in them. Only in this way can we avoid tremendous waste of energy and ability and secure the greatest amount and highest quality of production. Only in this way will the workers find the greatest satisfaction in their work, which is in itself a matter of primary concern for human life and has a very desirable reaction upon practical achievement.

It may be urged in favour of competition that by its means we come nearer to this matching of men and occupations than in any other way. It would, of course, be too much to assert that everyone is in the right place to-day. Even if competition had free play, there would probably be a good many displaced

by the sheer force of circumstance. But in our present social condition there are a number of forces at work which limit and modify the working of competition itself. What is claimed is that because on the whole our system is competitive, on the whole people are sorted out and graded according to the kind and degree of their ability. The directive posts are filled by those most apt for the control of their fellows, the specially skilled trades are filled by those possessing the appropriate ability, the men at the top are for the most part those who ought to be there, and the incompetent are relegated to their proper places.

In this argument great stress is laid on the selective value of competition, and something more than analogy is found in the biological law which is to-day accepted by practically all scientific thinkers, viz. : that the struggle for existence leads to the elimination of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. When all forms of animal and plant life are struggling freely for place and nutriment, those that are least favourably endowed tend to be crowded out or used up as food for those that prey upon

them, while those that manage, by some qualities possessed in greater measure than by these others, to secure their place leave offspring similarly endowed. So the standard of those qualities is continually raised, and if new characters appear which confer advantage in the struggle, those that possess them will survive and give rise to new species. Similarly, it is held, competition in human affairs awards the best places to the fittest, eliminates the unfit, and raises the general standard of ability.

Perhaps the greatest advantage claimed for competition in this connection is that it is impersonal in its working, just as the process described above is called *Natural Selection*. Those who fail have only their own incompetence to blame, for there is no favouritism in a purely natural system. From this a powerful negative argument has been built up by a corresponding criticism of all positive alternatives.

All other methods of selection must fall under one of two heads—automatic, or controlled by personal choice. The vice of all other automatic processes, besides the competitive, is that they do not select. Such

devices as casting lots, promotion of seniority, and allotment of positions by priority of application manifestly disregard fitness altogether. The one method which might seem to have something of the virtue of natural selection in it is the hereditary caste system. But this fails in that it includes all the offspring, whereas in the natural process the unfit among these are eliminated as pitilessly as the others, while the more fit in otherwise weakly strains have their chance.

In the case of any mode of personal selection it is impossible to exclude the influence of bias on the part of selectors. The old plan of leaving public posts in the gift of those in power led to all kinds of nepotism and jobbery, and the "spoils system" at present in vogue in the United States is notorious for the same thing. If anything like a popular vote is taken for the filling of positions, those will be won by qualities that are best fitted to win the election, but not necessarily the best to fulfil the function in question. This is the initial objection to experiments in democratising the control of industry.

The advantages claimed for competition are

real and substantial, though it is clear that they are subject to a considerable discount, at least under modern conditions. Admittedly this strong stimulus to production involves much hasty work. The high pressure at which men produce means that the goods are marred by this haste and often turn out to be waste-products. If we grant that the volume of production is raised to its greatest extent by competition, a wiser and slower industrial process, if it gave us less in quantity, might yield us more in satisfaction. Coupled with hasty work, we have much that is shoddy and deliberately poor, if not worse than poor, in modern production. Competition does not result uniformly in the production of the best goods. Indeed, it often seems to eliminate them.

This effect of competition may be traced even more clearly in art and education than in industry; for in the former we have to face defects in taste and understanding, and not merely the gullibility of the public. In a competitive system the artist, the educationist, and often the minister of religion feel

obliged to make their work conform to a standard which offends their ideals, because otherwise they would exert no influence at all. But the same difficulty appears all through modern industry.

Moreover, the struggle for markets is apt to be blind and chaotic, and even where it is well-informed it involves much misdirected effort. When individual firms work in isolation and, so far as may be, keep their calculations to themselves, it is inevitable that we should be faced again and again with what is apparently overproduction. A particular market is glutted, simply as the result of the natural play of competitive forces. A certain amount of overlapping is a requisite for an effective competitive struggle, and consequently some waste seems to be inherent in the system. Even where the actual production of a particular class of goods is not in excess of the demand, the struggle for markets means ceaseless advertising and a vast development of middlemen, employed simply in the comparatively non-productive marketing process. It is a great defect of

competition that it directs so much energy to advertising and allied work—energy which might be devoted to the production of more solid joys.

Then it is obvious that, under the present system, many of our resources are unutilised because they cannot be turned immediately to individual profit, while their utilisation would be an immense social gain. Not only does individualist competition tend to neglect certain services which from a national point of view are more than worth while (such as the provision of lighthouses, or a proper scheme of afforestation), but in general we are confronted with waste labour, waste capital, and waste land, standing idle side by side, either because directing ability is needlessly absorbed in the competitive struggle, or because the supply of such ability is artificially restricted by social conventions. It is not immediately or not sufficiently profitable to the individual, though it would be of enormous advantage to society to utilise the waste of human energy thus involved. The pursuit of private profit diverts the best directing ability

and the greater power of capital to the organisation of the more competent sections of labour, leaving the more difficult, and socially more important, task of organising the unfit to those who have not sufficient resources for it.

The problem of organising this mass of labour to its highest advantage, and of developing its capacity to the highest power, falls now to the reformers and the politicians and to a small minority of employers, most of whom are in somewhat straitened circumstances themselves, rather than to those who exhibit the highest qualities of commercial organisation. The perpetuation of sweated industries and dangerous trades is partly, but only partly, due to the desire of employers to obtain a maximum of profit from the work of their employees at a cost to the latter which is indefensible. It is due more generally to the fact that, the attention of the great captains of industry being concentrated upon the perfection of their own more prosperous part of the industrial machine, and not being claimed for the problem of organising industry

as a whole, the task of relating the different parts is not resting upon those who are most competent to undertake it. In that sense all this evil is due to the lack of co-operation between the different bodies and powers which count in industry. It is due, in a word, to an isolation of interests which neglects the total good. It is due to the competition of large interests rather than of individuals, a sphere of competition where co-operation is surely possible. In any case, the present system of competitive industry is very far from utilising our resources to the full or to the best advantage.

One other form of waste requires special and more detailed consideration. "Scrapping," and sudden, hasty scrapping, is ruthlessly practised, and regarded as economically and socially beneficial under competitive industry. It is defended as necessary to economic progress. It may be doubted whether, even in the case of machines, a change which is worth while to the individual who makes it is always worth while to society at large. But scrapping affects men as well as machines. No society can safely legalise a system which ruthlessly

scraps men. Yet this is happening all the time, and even economically it cannot be justified.

It is a grave defect of the present competitive order that the excellences it achieves are secured at great social cost. Competition may bring a number of the right people to the right positions, but it assigns a larger number to positions which are not right for any human being even if we could assume their failure to be their fault. It means penalties for failure as well as rewards for success. If under present conditions extra ability won extra recognition, while ordinary industry and faithfulness received a moderate sufficiency, there would be very little objection to the distribution of tasks and the classification of society by means of competition. The defence of the competitive by an appeal to the law of natural selection admits the squeezing out of those who are unfit, and this entails in practice an amount of human misery that becomes the more appalling the more closely it is investigated. This burden of suffering which every competitive community seems bound to carry greatly outweighs, in the judgment of many, any

extra amount or higher quality of production which competition can claim to achieve over other methods.

It must be remembered that the competitive struggle for profit differs essentially from the natural struggle for existence.¹ They who come to grief in the former do not cease to contend in the latter. In the struggle for profit people may be great failures, but there are alternatives as regards existence. They can drag on an ineffective existence and still propagate their kind, being even more effective than others in this respect. They can substitute some form of predatory exaction for effective accomplishment and become wholly parasitic. In any case the failures have to be supported. They cannot be annihilated in a Christian society. Consequently the triumphs of competition involve a material as well as a social cost. A vast amount of the community's stock of goods must continually be used up by and for the ineffectives, through the Poor Law, through charity, and through the public services dealing with the disease, degeneracy,

¹ On some further points in connection with competition and evolution consult the Note at the close of this chapter.

and crime which arise from the conditions under which the failures exist. What is perhaps more costly still, the labour and ability of many really effective persons are used up in looking after those rejected by competition, instead of being devoted to genuinely productive occupations.

The critic of the existing business world will further urge that liberty of demand assured by competition is quite useless and ineffective for the masses of the people. It is claimed as an advantage that competition stimulates demand, especially demand for luxuries. This means that the supposed gain falls to the lot of the well-to-do and not to society at large. It does not matter much to the poor whether their demands are stereotyped by custom or necessity. Indeed, custom would be a kinder taskmaster.

It should be added that for the social reformer one of the worst features of the present system is the misdirection of productive energy through the mal-distribution of wealth. The total volume of production may be greater than would accrue under any other system, but the proportion of wealth-producing power

devoted to luxuries is altogether excessive. A community that was at once less competitive and less wealthy than England might be happier and from a material point of view better off if its energies were embodied in boots and shirts instead of in vanity-bags and diamond tiaras. The common welfare would be promoted by making a large addition to the former class of goods and withdrawing labour and capital from the latter.

To criticisms of this kind the whole-hearted defender of competition will usually reply that some of these defects are in a measure bound up with the struggle itself, and form part of the price we have to pay for liberty and progress. He may also claim that some of the drawbacks from which the worker suffers, such as lack of self-direction, and monotonous tasks, are not justly attributed to competition. They spring from the use of machinery and the growth of the factory system, and the problems presented here would exist if private enterprise and competitive industry were abolished. But the worst evils of which complaint is made are really due not so much to competition itself as to the imperfect

character of modern competition. If the competitors were more nearly on an equality, if educational, social, and financial advantages were not so unequally distributed, all could be well, or at least better than to-day. Many forms of competition should be suppressed as immoral. Private enterprise requires supplementing in certain directions, and will always require it. The provision of certain services which individuals cannot supply at a profit; the control of monopolies; the caring for those who are beaten and broken in the industrial process—these and similar duties will always call for collective action. The policy of equalising opportunity by improving education, and perhaps by limiting the right of bequest, must be carried out, that competition may be fair and effective. Higher education and a diffusion of equality of opportunity will largely reduce the various forms of waste alleged as the outcome of competition. But whatever modifications are necessary or possible, competition rests on a profound instinct, a motive to which human nature will always respond, and apart from which it will never make an adequate response

in the realm of production. Freedom of enterprise and the competitive struggle essential to it are absolutely vital to the maintenance and progressive development of our industrial output. "Experience shows that, as human nature is at present constituted, self-interest stimulates industry, the acquisition of skill and knowledge and enterprise, all of which are active agents in advancing the material well-being of the race."¹

This is the crucial question. Many would admit that human nature as at present constituted requires this spur. Men must be won by appeals to ambition, or driven by appeals to fear. Not only employers, but even working-class leaders themselves seem sometimes to fear that security and a minimum wage would both damp the worker's social enthusiasm and lessen his output. The Servile State is an ugly possibility. But we shall have to inquire how human nature comes to be constituted thus. Is it formed thus in the cradle or by the influence of home and school? Or does some more sinister influence crush humanity into business shape? It is, moreover, certain

¹ Hadley, *op. cit.*

that what is best in human nature is not enlisted in the work of wealth-production. The better self in men resents the constant appeal to their self-interest, and they work in revolt. There are resources in human nature which competition ignores and suppresses. Whether or not these resources would suffice to maintain production at its present level may be open to doubt, but we might be willing to put up with a smaller volume of material wealth from a business system which yielded a greater moral satisfaction.

NOTE ON COMPETITION AND EVOLUTION.

The thorough-going advocate of competition who has taken refuge in the biological analogy might be disposed to argue that the defects of our present system are due to the interference of charity with the natural results of the competitive struggle. If we set aside our human scruples and let the process of elimination work itself out to its appointed end, there would be no substantial reduction of the advantages derived from the present order.

All charitable helps should be stopped and we should cease to spend our care on those who have shown that they cannot maintain themselves. The effect of a true system of competition cannot be judged from existing society, because that society is not freely competitive.

This view raises the serious point whether the law of natural selection could in any case be applied by man to his own affairs, and whether such free and open competition has not been made impossible for man by the development of those qualities which make him human. Natural selection is the play of the forces which constitute the environment upon any organism, but whatever man does on his own initiative must be the play of his own forces upon environment itself. To go back to natural selection is to surrender just those qualities which raise him above the plant and the brute. As F. B. Jevons puts it : "The qualities which brought success in the struggle for existence to man as an animal were rapacity, greed, selfishness, and an absolute and cruel indifference to the wants and sufferings of others. . . . The qualities which

make a man a human being are tenderness, pity, mercy, compassion, self-sacrifice, and love."¹ We may not divest ourselves of humanity in order to return to nature.

It is, however, even more important for our present point to note that while these spiritual qualities make it abhorrent to dream of returning to such a struggle, the development of intelligent judgment, of deliberate choice with reference to a conscious ideal, of purposeful manipulation of natural forces, and of the power to educate renders such a return not only unnecessary but absurd. For these human powers can do far more than natural selection in a shorter time.

Much misunderstanding has arisen from the fallacy of ambiguity which lies in the use of the phrase "survival of the fittest." In human affairs it is customary to use the word "fit" with reference to some special function, or to excellence in general. But in biology the term has no such reference. Huxley defined the struggle for existence as "the competition of each with all," the result of which is "the selection, that is to say—the

¹ "Evolution," p. 28.

survival—of those forms which, on the whole, are best adapted to the conditions which at any period obtain, and which are therefore in that respect and only in that respect the fittest.”¹ Merely as a method natural selection allows any quality, good or bad, to be the cause of survival, provided that it does suit the condition most aptly. If fleetness be the quality, then those that are fleet survive; if rapacity, then the rapacious. A quality which possesses high survival value is mere abundant fertility, the possession of which is usually accompanied by a marked absence of qualitative differentiation. In other words, it is not excellence, but mere survival with which natural selection is concerned. If there has been a truly progressive evolution, it is due to some other factor in the cosmic process: perhaps to a reaching out after excellence in the life which struggles and cannot give itself wholly to mere survival as an all-sufficing aim: perhaps to something in the total environment which welcomes excellence and gives it a

¹ “Evolution and Ethics.” On the whole subject see J. A. Thomson, “The War and Biology,” in “Papers for War-time.”

greater chance of being the fittest to survive :
or perhaps to the purpose of a great Director
who uses natural selection as one of His
methods and uses it as far as it will go, for
“ that divine far-off event to which the whole
creation moves.”

CHAPTER IV

COMPETITION AND CHARACTER

FROM the consideration of the economic effectiveness or ineffectiveness of our present dependence upon the competitive motive in industry, we turn now to the consideration of its moral outcome. What sort of character is fostered by the competitive system? On the one hand, it is alleged to foster grit, endurance, self-reliance, energy, initiative, and power; on the other, it is accused of fostering despair, suspicion, greed, cunning, enmity, pride, and hardness of heart. The claims are made on either side with a confidence and with a frequency which call for thorough examination. Perhaps reason may be found in both claims if we will discriminate between the effect produced by competition upon different people, with different opportunities and training, and in different sets of circumstances.

When the rewards are not too seductive,

nor the penalties too severe, the effect of competition is often to promote exertion, add new zest to action, and lead to increasing excellence in work. On the other hand, when persons compete with a grave initial disadvantage in capacity or opportunity, or against forces which they can neither master nor comprehend; or when hardships brought to them by a turn of the wheel of progress go unregarded and their victims unaided, the effect may be discouragement, demoralisation, and the paralysis both of effort and of goodwill. These contrary results will appear from time to time in the analysis which follows—an analysis based upon a considerable body of evidence. In estimating the bearing of this evidence, it is not always easy to distinguish between the effects due solely to the competitive element in the industrial system, and those due to other elements, such, for example, as the element of specialisation involved. The distinction is kept in view as much as possible.

1. *Competition and Grit.*

That the struggle of industrial competition produces grit is one of the most undeniable

claims on its behalf. There is value in the hardship of the struggle. It is good that men should be disciplined in their appetites and enjoyments, and should suffer actual pain and privation as an element in their training. Some real self-negation should be enforced in the early stages of developing character. Self-mastery and endurance have often been acquired by the necessity of toil and abstinence imposed upon men and women in their early struggles for a livelihood. We may go further and add that many social as well as individual qualities are fostered by the compulsion of working in co-operation with others and adjusting oneself to their idiosyncrasies. Punctuality, exactness, self-restraint, and even a degree of self-surrender are taught in that school.

But hardship has other results as well. The successful do not develop the same qualities as the unsuccessful. Privation has maimed and mutilated many lives and soured many tempers and dispositions. Livingstone was no doubt prepared for the hardships of his African life by the simple austerity of his boyhood in a cottar's home. Carlyle, on

the other hand, suffered in temper through his early struggles. Indeed, to judge by all our accepted educational theory and practice it would seem that on reflection we believe that character is best produced in circumstances that are not too harsh and exacting.

In our schools we begin by making life simple, hardy, healthy, and generally happy for all who show even a tolerable readiness to play the game. We put the strain on gradually and always with moderation, tempering it to the strength which has to bear it. We call out pluck and endurance in the name of loyalty rather than self-interest. We find that this kind of education, if it is carried out thoroughly, does as a matter of fact succeed in an enormous number of cases in producing men who are capable of hardship and labour, and who know both how to act by themselves and how to act in concert with others. Our competitive system forsakes this ideal in more than one respect. In the first place, it does not secure a life of general well-being to all those who are ready to exert themselves. In the second place, its prizes are not really in proportion to effort nor in consideration of real

social utility, but are often in proportion to mere ingenuity in securing personal advantage.

Nor must we overlook the fact that the advantages of hardship belong rather to poverty than to competition. In an age which is rich in resources the successful quickly escape from the operation of such influences. An advanced civilisation like our own must discipline its members by some more considered method of imposing restrictions upon their enjoyments in early life. It is absurd to leave it to the haphazard effect of competition, which allows some to escape the discipline altogether, and imposes it as a lifelong penalty upon others, who bear it whilst witnessing the immunity of their more favoured fellows. Let it be granted that the discipline and animal adventure of struggle are necessary, even in a high degree, for the perfection of character, and that they may not be discarded until other more social disciplines and more spiritual adventures have been put in their place. Let it be granted that men should face mortal risks when they are seasoned to it and be schooled to self-reliance under stern adversity. It may still be found possible to secure these

ends without making men, so much as now, the enemies of their neighbours.

2. *The Value of Rivalry.*

We find the value of competition in commerce and industry at its highest when men can fight their battle through with sufficient success to bring them a moderate satisfaction. The need of one man to measure his strength with another ; the stimulus of seeing another do something which is within one's own reach, though beyond one's past achievement ; the encouragement of gaining recognition ; the spur of possible advancement ; the challenge of rivalry from worthy competitors ; the value of discipline—all these operate to brace the mind and will for steady and strenuous achievement. As in the case of rivalry in racing or other sport, it is good to have an able antagonist. But this bracing only results where the tension is not too high, nor the hazards too great, and where the relation with fellow-workers is one of friendliness rather than one of antagonism.

The difference is well illustrated by considering the comparative effect of rivalry

between friends who are competing for the best places in life without the likelihood of any of them badly failing, as against the rivalry of those who are competing for a single lifebelt in a wreck. Three boys pass up a cadet school together, and compete with one another in examination after examination for the higher places in the Naval Service, and retain their friendship unimpaired throughout. They have suffered nothing, and gained much, by the emulation which their rivalry has engendered. Those who cannot stand the test of such personal rivalry need probably to be subjected to more of it. The competition in schools for the places of honour in work and in games has usually this merit, and little corresponding disadvantage. In boys' and girls' clubs, the members of which have not been subjected to such influence before, it is an excellent discipline of character to pit the representatives of different clubs and schools against each other in competitions which lead to the honour of the one and the defeat of another. A character is ill-formed that cannot bear to have its capacity thus ascertained and published without thereby feeling abashed by

failure or embittered by defeat. It is a fault to be unable to take a beating and admit the superiority of a rival.

Another instance will bring out another point of difference. There is direct rivalry between the members of the medical profession, who compete for paid posts under Local Government authorities, or for posts of honour in the hospitals. In neither case is the competition sustained or important enough to affect a character deeply, but it is reported that whereas the competition for paid posts is apt to be accompanied by meanness and heart-burning it is not so in the competition for honours. The common possession of a professional ideal overshadows the question of personal gain or loss.

These instances, friendly and altogether beneficial, taken from outside the sphere of commercial and industrial competition, could of course be matched from within it. Business rivals are frequently boon companions on the road or in the coffee room. The tonic of rivalry is then at its best. Indeed, in days when berths in the public service were so snug and secure that they

could be retained without any question of the ability with which their duties were discharged, no good accrued on the average to the character of those who were thus withdrawn from the ordinary spur of competition. The man who slacks, and suffers his capacities to deteriorate in a service which is nominally for the public good, is clearly a poorer character than a business man who is keen and alert in an occupation which is for his own profit. A stimulus which assists a man to put forth greater energy, and reach out to a standard above his present attainment, putting thought into his work and rising from his first crude efforts to a well-formed and disciplined achievement, is good in itself. It is said that nothing has helped the moral development of the Negroes in the eastern States of America so much as the incoming of Italian emigrants against whom they have had to measure themselves. The lack of any effective standard of comparison by which a man is constantly compelled to measure himself may easily lead to aimlessness, slackness, inertia, stagnation, and complacency. The effectiveness of the standard is all the better if failure is accom-

panied by some loss of advantage, provided the loss be not so great nor so constantly threatening that a man is paralysed by the fear of it.

3. *The Stimulus of a Fair Reward.*

A further advantage is secured by competition when faithfulness and initiative can secure a just and proportionate reward. Excellence in business qualities is, no doubt, affected greatly by the higher salaries which are given to greater effort and usefulness. Where one is driven by fear of disaster, or fired by ambition for commercial fame, scores will be stimulated to do their best by the hope of securing a slightly more comfortable position for themselves and their families. Competition probably achieves its best results at present in the cases of clerks and managers of businesses undergoing steady development, who know that their constancy will not be overlooked. Men are so constructed that they respond to the encouragement which first recognises and then rewards ability and vigour.

But we should do wrong if we supposed

that the desire for the maximum, or even for an additional reward for all additional service rendered, was a quality upon which the business world depended very considerably. It would be a bad look-out for most houses of business if it were not for the class of good honest servants, who do not get the top appointments, nor covet constant advancement, but who work honourably, and energetically for their firms. The men who carry the weight of the business of the country are men who have achieved positions which enable them to live a steady and tolerably secure life, in which they can satisfy their moderate desires, and who are prepared to play the game with their employers fairly and steadily, and not be on the constant look-out for better prospects or higher pay. The quarrel we have with the business world at present is not that it places so many men in positions where their industry is duly recognised, but that it deprives a much larger number of the encouragement which is due to the exercise of such abilities as they possess. The men who can only do things which crowds of other people can do, and have not easily accessible means of

improving their capacities, do not meet with the opportunity of such responsible and interesting work as would call out their powers.

4. *The Stimulus of Fear.*

It has been admitted, then, that the stimulus of personal rivalry and the desire for a fair reward are ingredients in the motive for good work, but in our present system a large number of people are subjected to certain kinds of stimulus to work so essentially beneath the dignity of human beings that they are bound to have a demoralising effect in exact proportion to the degree in which they operate. This may be the case, for example, with those whose gain is palpably accompanied with a crippling loss to their fellows, or with those, again, who exert themselves chiefly from the fear of being deprived by others of the opportunity of livelihood.

It is the natural thing for a healthy human being to enjoy work and enter into it vigorously and intelligently, if the work itself seems to be worth doing, and if those for whom and with whom it is done are on the whole reason-

able and friendly folk. Especially is this the case in work where skill and originality are involved and where some pride and joy can be taken in the doing of it. The intelligence and capacity which result from such activity beget in their turn an increase of zest and power for work and so in the end an increasing output. We have sufficient evidence from the days when work was much less subject to competitive influence than it is to-day that men will work both hard, and well and contentedly when they are not artificially driven or coerced by a sense of insecurity. A much larger proportion of the work of mediæval times was done under such conditions than is the case to-day.

So, on the other hand, it is easy to understand that the senseless tasks that are sometimes set in workhouses with the sole aim of making men exert themselves, and with no visible result, destroy the taste for work of any kind. Yet there are many who are compelled, under our present system, to work perpetually upon tasks which are distasteful, trivial, and to them almost meaningless. There is an insult to human personality in requiring

people to work exclusively or mainly at such occupations. And the insult is avenged by the resultant mixture of slackness and restlessness to be found amongst large numbers of those whose work is of this character. This is all the more so now that so many who work under poverty-stricken conditions are conscious of the great wealth of the community to which they belong, and are sensitive to the callous cruelty which commits them to a hardship and insecurity which are the obverse of the luxury of the rich. When, too, the added exertion of the workman would not seem to benefit him so much as his employer, the sense of injustice further cuts the nerve of effort and intensifies the bitterness of class feeling.

It is sometimes supposed that we have in our society a lower stratum of human beings who are not capable of being actuated by the normal motives that operate with more healthily developed and reasonably educated persons of a higher class. The question is asked superciliously : " Would these people be hard-working, or punctual, or reliable, unless it were for fear of losing their employment if they were to fail ? " We must defend humanity

against the slur implied in such a question. No doubt it is true historically that man has learned to labour and exercise his faculties by the discipline of hardship and necessity in the stern conflict with nature. But as a result of that discipline man has discovered the value of a life of wide and varied activity, and those who have liberty to choose their own course under the operation of a healthy public opinion do, as a matter of fact, engage in active and fruitful pursuits. The habits of a certain small section of the idle rich do but indicate that where the sense of obligation to the community is weak the activity becomes more feverish and ineffective without becoming more enjoyable. It is a direct insult to any class of our fellows, and, if the insult be accepted, a degradation to them to keep them under the prevailing influence of motives which belong to the more barbarous time.

5. *The Demoralisation of Fighting to the Death.*

We have now to consider the influence of conditions which involve the open and conscious rivalry of competitors whose livelihood

is at stake, and we begin by taking an instance which goes far to show to what a bestial level life is reduced when competition for the bare necessities of existence is provoked. The extract which follows is taken from a recent description of the conditions which prevail at the London Docks¹ when one of the morning "calls" for labourers is made by the foreman in charge:—

At one "call" which the writer attended there were some sixty men waiting. The foreman stood on the raised ledge of a warehouse and eyed the crowd all over as if it were a herd of cattle. Then very deliberately he beckoned a man with his finger, and after a considerable interval a second and a third, until he had taken ten in all.

It is during the latter stages of a heavy call that disturbances are most frequent. The men begin to fidget and to push; those who are small and weak are shoved aside by the more burly, and sometimes a struggling mass of men may be seen elbowing and fighting to get to the front, and to attract the foreman's atten-

¹ "Casual Labour at the Docks," by H. A. Mess, Mansfield House, chap. ii. Geo. Bell & Sons. 2s. net. 1916.

tion. At one of the big calls on the south side of the Albert Dock the men wait to be taken on in a kind of cattle pen. The foremen mount into booths, not unlike pulpits in appearance, and from them they distribute the metal tallies which are the token of engagement. The spectacle of some scores of men struggling violently is by no means infrequent here. Occasionally a foreman will toss a tally to a man at the rear of the crowd, just as a morsel of food might be thrown to a dog. Towards the close of the call all hands will be lifted in competition for the foreman's attention, and stretched forward to secure the coveted tally. The scene reminds one of the crowd of suppliants in "Oedipus Rex," or the Roman crowd in Sir Herbert Tree's staging of "Julius Cæsar."

Happily, at Liverpool and elsewhere, attempts are now being made to diminish the irregularity of dock labour. But day by day in the scramble for work at the dock-gates, at any of our chief ports where the problem of casual labour has not been mastered, this struggle is to be witnessed.

The rivalry between small traders and

shopkeepers, though not so crude and overt, may be, and often is, no less bitter and degrading. There are many who are eternally in the position of being almost dependent for their livelihood on the ruin or considerable impoverishment of persons whom they know and with whom they consciously compete. Unable to extricate themselves from their positions, many feel keenly the violence they do to their ideals when they kill the trade of their competitors and cut them out by greater energy and ingenuity; for it is often little more than advertising ingenuity that enables one firm to succeed against another, and not any marked superiority in the work produced.

The rivalry for employment also places many people under severe temptation to fraud. In a company of workmen recently gathered at random in a north-country town everyone present stated that he knew of men who had been urged to fraud as the price of retaining their jobs, sometimes being asked to conceal faults, sometimes to adulterate goods, sometimes to state what was not true about goods sold, sometimes to falsify weights. Such things would, of course, occur, as they do

occur, apart from the pressure of competition, but it can hardly be denied that the pressure of competition upon tens of thousands of people whose positions are very precarious adds greatly to their frequency.

In the realm of big business enterprise, where firms are out to destroy one another in order to capture their rivals' trade, men must sometimes steel themselves to deal very cruelly with their fellow-men. Men who have developed big businesses must often know that all along the line of their success other men have been forced into bankruptcy with no very great hope of finding help in their distress. In most cases the ruin wrought is not brought to the notice of the successful competitor: in cases where it is there is often a measure of personal consideration shown to the losers. On the other hand, there are cases where one firm deliberately sets out to undermine the business of another, using every device of secret spying upon its methods and seduction of its agents in order to compass its downfall. In the average case the harm done is neither done by foul deeds, nor can be followed by good ones.

In cases where the success of some big firm has resulted in the crushing of a smaller firm, says one witness, "it is generally found that the incident affects the morals of both parties and in different ways darkens or wrecks the lives of both." We are reminded of the words of John Wesley regarding the way in which his followers might legitimately acquire wealth: "We cannot study to ruin our neighbours' trade in order to advance our own. None can gain by swallowing up his neighbours' substance without gaining the damnation of hell." There must be many cases in which this is literally true.

6. *The Encouragement of Mediocrity and Superficiality.*

In spite of the widespread and excellent services of competition as a discipline of character, and apart, too, from the extremely evil and not uncommon results just treated of, there are grave dangers always connected with the appeal to instincts which, natural as they are and right in their proper use, are certainly exaggerated and over-developed by our present commercial practice. It is not for

a moment suggested that all those engaged in competitive pursuits succumb to these dangers. But the evil tendencies are so strong that many are carried away to a greater or less degree.

First of all, just as competition, by increasing the pace at which work is produced, leads often to bad work, so it produces a corresponding effect upon the character of many who work at the speed and with the standards which commercial competition sets—a dull content with work that has little personality in it, and that pays more attention to superficial appearance than to real worth. The people who earn a few shillings more a week than their fellow-workers are often the people who turn out what is called “scamp work.” Some are compelled to do work that offends their consciences if they are to hold their places at all, whilst others are tempted in the same way, but for the motive of a slightly higher pay. The “ca-canny” policy of the trade union and the “showy” tendency in manufacture are equally direct and equally dismal outcomes of the competitive system.

The effect of constantly doing work that is not as good as it appears will be admittedly damaging to personal character. It may not be so readily admitted that a man who is capable of artistic designs, say in cabinet-making, is sacrificing his character to his prospects if he stereotypes his designs for profitable manufacture instead of continuing to produce better and better designs. But we submit that, on any high theory of the greatness of human personality as God intended it to be, the man who sacrifices his artistic capacities for the sake of commercial success is falling seriously short of the ideal. This is surely so, except where such sacrifice may occasionally be justified on the ground that it puts a fairly good article within the reach of multitudes who would otherwise get none at all. Such discouragement of personal qualities of craftsmanship is a danger.

The reaction of the competitive motive upon ideals of work may be studied to good profit when it is found intruding in the professional world, as, for example, in this indictment from the teaching world:

“Here is a man at the head of a large educational establishment who has risen from the ranks and been eminently successful from a worldly point of view. He values qualities of character and intellect in direct proportion to their chances of success in life. He encourages and advertises academic success from the same point of view. He also regards with jealousy and distrust the success of other institutions that may prove rivals to his own, and judges of changes in regulations, not from a broad educational point of view, but as they are likely to affect his particular interests. He seems to have no place for spiritual values, and his dealings with his students and staff show the effect of this deficiency. Here, again, is a very successful teacher, who, since the rewards of the teaching profession are mostly reserved for the heads of schools, has obtained a post as head-mistress, for which she is not particularly suited, and has almost given up actual teaching. Here, again, is a college lecturer with exceptional powers of stimulating and inspiring pupils by lecturing and individual teaching. But,

finding that the highly paid professional appointments are to a great extent dependent on a name for published work, he is devoting the greater part of his time to the writing of learned treatises on minute points of scholarship with a view to proving his erudition and so securing the chance of a better-paid post." In all these cases it would be generally allowed that character has been sacrificed to private gain, in the sacrifice of a high professional standard to a "business" motive. But the concession surely carries some judgment upon "business" motives as a whole.

Or let us take an instance of character resulting from the competitive motive as it is seen operating in the British Navy. Competition enters in three forms: (i) Competitive examinations in technical and general subjects, extending over the first six years, according to the results of which advancement is early or late. (ii) Competition between the various ships in the various branches of warlike efficiency. Though nominally between ship and ship, such competition is generally associated

in the minds of all concerned with the particular officer in each ship responsible for that particular branch. (iii) General competition for advancement from rank to rank. "When," says a naval officer, "the desire to succeed and secure advancement is developed out of proportion to the desire for the good of the service or the good of the ship, the effect is usually to foster a bad standard of seamanship. Good solid work does not pay in competition so well as ability to interpret regulations in the least exacting manner. The demand for certain results creates a supply of men able to produce them, and the class of work that pays in competitions bears to conscientious preparation for war much the same relation that cramming for an examination bears to solid learning. These regulated competitions prevent the growth of healthy public opinion; since all feel, with some show of reason, that the task asked of them by the Admiralty is to contend successfully against certain fixed conditions, and few realise that the fixed conditions should be interpreted in the widest possible sense as an index to the spirit in which all is to be done."

7. *The Encouragement of Selfishness as against Social Solidarity.*

So long as the motive of personal gain or advancement is secondary its satisfaction does add a certain pleasant spice to life, but as soon as it becomes primary it is extraordinarily dangerous. Those who from their youth up are urged to exert themselves for what they can get for themselves are in great danger of becoming so selfish as to lose their sense of loyalty to the other partners to their effort. We would not set out to generate selfishness deliberately, but we cannot escape from doing so incidentally and inadvertently so long as our commercial practice pits one against another, as now it does, and our commercial training so glorifies the aim of "getting on." Witness the unedifying advertisements put out by commercial schools.

We find lingering still in many parts of the country, and in certain backwaters of industry, a spirit of unwillingness to receive in return for any service more than is regarded as a due return—and that calculated on a modest basis. The men and women actuated by this spirit would feel that they dishonoured

themselves if they allowed themselves to get the better of a bargain. Now that is the exact opposite of the temper which seeks to retain for itself the major share, or even as large as possible a share, of the profit of a joint effort. Yet it surely is not too much to say that the tendency of a great deal of business is to regard it as the natural and proper thing for men to appropriate to themselves as much of the profit of a transaction as is compatible with their definite obligations. We are indeed setting out to generate the churlish type of character which is unwilling to render service without proportionate reward, or to take its share in the hard and irksome work of life so long as that can be placed on other shoulders.

Those who know the temper of young people in new countries speak with considerable alarm of the deadly tendency to absorption in material and selfish interests, when the desire for private success is not kept in check by a strong traditional sense of loyalty and duty to the community. In our own country we have a long tradition of national service, but it has not sufficed to save a large number

of those who are involved in trade from disgraceful absorption in their own success in our time of national stress and anxiety. We all feel now, by contrast with the generosity with which Youth responds to the call for armed service in time of War, how mean and despicable is the type of character which the concentration upon private profit and advancement so easily tends to produce. It is indeed calculated to foster "private-mindedness" as against the national spirit upon which we so much depend and must depend yet more. It is impossible to believe that the spirit of self-sacrifice on behalf of the nation which will be called for by the years of strain that follow the war can be maintained at the requisite level among men of commercial and financial ability except by some signal and widespread repudiation of the motive of private profit as the primary motive for enterprise.

The attempt is sometimes made to balance responsibility between the love of the customer for a bargain and the desire of the manufacturer to put a cheap and passable article upon the market ; but surely the two things are the same. The desire for a bargain is the

desire to receive as much as possible for money paid. The desire for profit is the desire to receive as much as possible for service rendered. A community set on the one will be set on the other. We must confess that our community is one which constantly encourages its members and teaches its children that it is their right, if not even their duty, to see that their share of the profit of any transaction in which they may engage is as near as possible to the maximum obtainable without definite breach of contract.

Yet again, the temptation to vanity and the desire for social aggrandisement to which human nature is easily prone are too greatly intensified by a system which offers the prospect of rather indefinite and almost unlimited monetary advancement to the successful man. It unduly strengthens the desire for profit independently of what may be the cost to others. It obscures the broad economic fact that the luxury of the rich intensifies the poverty of the poor. It sets too many striving for or tenaciously holding on to a standard of living which cannot be maintained with our present economic resources unless the squalor

of multitudes be maintained also. For it vests too large a share of the spending power, and that is the employing power, of the country in the hands of those who, *ex hypothesi*, are private-minded.

The basis of selfishness which we adopt in competitive business recoils curiously upon us when we are moved to satisfy our natural delight in disinterestedness. In a community where selfish interest is generally accepted as a leading motive for action, unselfish and disinterested action is apt to be met with suspicion and misunderstanding. Some ulterior motive of self-advancement is looked for behind an act of renunciation. It is curious how this operates to neutralise the effect of that true charity which men are so widely prepared to show to one another when their sympathies are aroused. It is met, and perhaps not unnaturally met, by the recipients with the suspicion that it is the conscience money of those who have grown wealthy with unscrupulous disregard of their neighbours, a form of insurance against social disturbance, an indulgence of their power to dispense alms, or even a weak and plunderable capitulation

to the beggar's art. Not a little of the charity of the country is utterly pernicious both morally and spiritually, alike for those who give and those who receive, because the basis of our life is understood to be strife rather than goodwill.

So, too, it is the rivalry of trade and commerce which begets the baneful temper of suspicion which surrounds so much of our social life. A curious instance of the state of mind resulting from our present standards is afforded by the following fact. Shopkeepers who wish to sell the best articles to their customers, and who therefore are reluctant to sell certain proprietary articles which they know to have inferior value, sometimes suffer considerably by their steadfastness to what they feel to be due to their customers. For it is a prevalent state of mind on the part of the customer to assume, surely with some measure of justification, that the attitude of the salesman towards him is not disinterested. Another instance comes readily to mind from the sphere of politics where political sincerity and wisdom are discredited because some motive of pecuniary self-interest is suspected.

8. *The Discouragement of the Spiritual Side of Life.*

The speeding up of business in consequence of competitive considerations operates, apart from any direct competition between individuals, to absorb men's energies in material pursuits to the stultification of the spiritual side of their nature. The pace is quickened by the unscrupulous and the greedy, and the rest have nothing for it but to comply or drop out entirely. Hence we get the unfortunate concentration of the leisure of youth in the business world upon courses of instruction far too exclusively technical to assist the all-round development of their natures, and that at a time of life when they should be peculiarly receptive of spiritual impressions. It is very likely, too, that the ungoverned quest of pleasure which has been such a feature of recent times is but the counterpart of a too intense absorption in business during business hours. The mind springs back too sharply. It is difficult to obtain repose of mind untroubled by the memories of business cares. Some form of activity of equal intensity seems to be the only possible alternative, and therefore the

hours of leisure are devoted to pleasures of a sensual and exciting kind.

For many the pressure of business is so great, and the opportunity of recoil to pleasure is so small, that the result is simply a gradual atrophy of the interests and the instincts which are not related to business pursuits. The outward sign of this may be a distaste for everything on the literary and artistic side of life, and a disinclination for any concern with the social and political problems of the community. Those who have the responsibility of their own businesses are much more liable to this stunting process than those who discharge definite responsibilities for definite payment in a large concern. In other words, it is the direct victims of competition who suffer most. One observer has noticed in a large Midland town how universally difficult it is to find amongst small shopkeepers any evidence of public spirit. It seems that "it taxes and overtaxes all their energies to keep their heads above water. There is never one single evening at liberty for relaxation, reading, concerts, lectures or meetings of any kind. Interest is almost inevitably narrowed

down to immediate private problems and dullness of mind and apathy of spirit are the result.”¹ The writer contrasts the keenness and many-sided interest of the skilled artisan immersed in the problems of trade-union organisation, his outlook extending to the interest of his neighbours, his class mates, his union, his fellow-townsmen, and his nation.

Those who have the spiritual care of young men and women sometimes notice in them a certain blunting of their finer feelings when business responsibilities increase and prospects become exciting. More than one has spoken of sudden and perilous temptation on the first occasion when any speculation or investment has turned out to great profit. The reason seems to be that business considerations suddenly tend to override considerations known to be more important. “In a recent discussion among a company of business men, all the group acknowledged a serious discrepancy between the law of love as taught by Christ and the law of competitive business. Half the group accepted this discrepancy as a necessity,

¹ This apathy might also be due to the feeling that an interest in public affairs might lead to loss of custom.

refusing to question the competitive system of doing business. But several were very decided that the result of average competitive business was to blunt a man's finest feelings, lower his highest ideals, and to retard or stop his social endeavours." In consequence the number of men is increasing who feel a certain sense of make-believe in their profession of loyalty to the Christian law of love. Their business life includes transactions which may imperil the fortunes of others without their being able to trace or remedy the wrongs which result. The matter is one they cannot ignore without a perilous reaction on their own characters. Those who escape from sensitiveness on such matters may do so at the cost of crushing their sympathies and doing violence to their good nature.

Further evidence may be quoted of the way in which competitive business retards the spiritual development at the expense of the purely calculating faculties. A clergyman once told of one of his churchwardens who had so acquired the habit of trying to persuade his clients to be content with less than they demanded (his business being to deal with

claims against an insurance company) that his invariable response to any proposal with regard to the work of his church was a suggestion that the work should be attempted on a smaller scale. In the group mentioned in the last paragraph it was found that "half of those present defined success in life largely along material lines, even going so far as to say that a man who proved unsuccessful in business was also unsuccessful in life." The material aspects of the question overshadowed all others. Yet it is curiously true, as Ruskin reminded us, that the valuation of character according to a man's power of getting on is apt to encourage just those qualities which men most readily reprobate when they are exhibited by their own intimate friends.

The last step is taken when a man becomes mercenary even in his recreations. There are men who have made an exceptionally good thing of their business whose joy in their possessions is largely connected with the pride they feel in having been able to purchase articles which cost so much. A man may walk in his garden and see in its different nooks and crannies, not primarily the works of God, but

primarily the many signs of the length of his own purse.

Finally, the acquisition of great personal wealth, apparently as a result of personal merit, is apt in very many cases to destroy the spiritual relation between a man and his fellows and so to pervert his relations with his God. The self-made man, whom the competitive system encourages, quite frequently grows harsh or apathetic towards poorer and less successful men. One experienced observer says: "In almost every case I have ever known, and these are many, of men who have become successful in accumulating great wealth, I have noticed a growing impatience with the sufferings and disabilities of the poor." When a man accumulates great wealth he does, in fact, appropriate to his own private use a disproportionate share of the good things the earth provides. The share may not seem to him disproportionate to his own capacity. He may justify it as proportionate to his own power to serve mankind. Justifying it in that way, he appeals to a standard which cannot be gainsaid by any economic tests; but his self-justification in the private enjoy-

ment of his wealth can only be purchased at a self-valuation dangerously high. Whatever relative truth that high self-valuation may possess, it puts the man in such relations to Almighty God and to his brethren that he is in a measure shut off from the satisfaction that comes from the sense of dependence upon God's mercy and delight in mutual dependence upon one's fellows. To those, then, who believe that a true character is one which grows by its sense of dependence upon God and delight in its fellow-men, the unqualified words of warning which Jesus spoke, whenever He spoke of the rich, seem no longer strained or inexplicable.

9. *Character and Environment.*

Some, of course, may claim that the economic fortunes of men and women are but God's judgments of their moral deserts, and that such judgments are rightly echoed by our social system. According to this view, the destitute are destitute because they are bad, and would reduce themselves and their families to misery in any circumstances; the successful are successful because they have

been virtuous, and it belongs to them to succeed ; the unscrupulous who succeed in spite of their impiety do so, not because they are unduly tempted by their economic opportunities, but because they are inherently evil, and they will meet their deserts hereafter ; each man is free to do good or to do evil no matter what is the environment in which he is situated, and up to a point he will fare as he deserves on earth and receive a final adjudication upon his individual merits hereafter. It is not in the system, but in the individual men composing it, that all the trouble lies.

But can there be any such isolation of a man from his fellows or of his character from the influences which play upon it ? We do not live to ourselves after that fashion. Each man shapes his neighbours, and is shaped in turn less by himself than by his predecessors and his contemporaries. Of ourselves we can only put a few stones into the fabric of our own character : the rest is built of the spirit and the traditions which we receive through our homes and friends, through our national literature and history, through the ideas which are latent in our language, the social conventions,

the trade usages and the political systems by which our minds are made and our conduct shaped. We are in large part what our social system makes us, and our successors will be largely made by the system of life we suffer to continue.

This doctrine does not by any means minimise individual responsibility. Each of us holds a fraction of his moral destiny absolutely in his keeping, and for that he is alone and absolutely responsible. Within limits he can be this or that. The limits are wider for some than for others, and every exercise of spiritual power sets them wider still—but never without measure. Outside the limits of this personal freedom there lie vast stretches of moral and spiritual possibility open, and only open, to collective conquest. The individual may suggest and lead that conquest, but only the community can achieve it. By the collective arrangements of trade and industry character is made and marred.

When we use the word “character” we may be thinking of the ability and capacity which a man possesses for the work which he has particularly to do, or we may be thinking

of his more fundamental moral and spiritual qualities—the temper of his mind and the disposition of his spirit. The latter characteristics are less at the mercy of outward circumstances than the former. No one would deny that skill and capacity are seriously affected by lack of opportunity for their proper use and exercise. But some might claim that the inner citadel of a man's heart and will are impregnable against the attack of untoward events and difficult environments.

Yet even in this latter sense a person's character is never independent of his surroundings. It is a familiar fact that men and women may be embittered or enfeebled by suffering or strain beyond their habitual strength, and all must know that their own moral and spiritual resources are only equal to a limited demand upon them. In times of weakness and difficulty we learn to lean upon others and draw our strength from them. Our power to do this depends upon outward circumstances. It is possible to be so placed that no such help is available, and this is frequently the case in our social system. Combinations of circumstances bring to bear

upon large classes of people spiritual influences which there is nothing in their spiritual environment to counteract. The moral and spiritual efficiency of human beings depends very largely upon their ability to live in regular and kindly relations with their own friends and families ; therefore it is imperilled by the dislocation of social life caused by sudden fluctuations of industry.

Take, for example, the interference with the family and social life of those who are practically compelled to work unlimited overtime whenever the extra pressure of business calls for it. Such demands may be made occasionally for short periods of time without any serious damage ; indeed, they may have a bracing effect. But those who are liable to be compelled at any moment, by forces outside their calculation and control, to sacrifice their leisure and work beyond the limit of their strength suffer serious harm. The physical reserves are unduly drawn upon. Nerve-power is exhausted. Mental freshness is impaired. Habits of recreation, reading, and human intercourse are interrupted. Sometimes ties of friendship and affection are

strained or snapped. Those who have had to do with educational movements amongst the working class know how grievously the work of education is interfered with by long-continued overtime. In such cases there is loss incurred for which extra pay is not a sufficient compensation.

Consider, again, what spiritual results may flow from the depletion of village life, which is traceable to the operations of economic causes. It is a commonplace that our population is becoming more and more urban, and we suffer in physique and in vigour of mind and imagination in consequence. But this transference of population from country to town has moral and spiritual results as well. A village population is now generally bereft of the majority of its more vigorous young people, both men and women, and in particular it is bereft of the men who formerly exercised various handicrafts in the village. A lower moral temperature in village life is traceable to the elimination of the village craftsmen: tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, and so forth. A community cannot afford to lose the contribution which such men make to the direction of its affairs

and the maintenance of its standards. The average individual brought up in such surroundings is thereby deprived of some of those moral and spiritual influences which he needs to make him a good citizen.

Fully developed individuals living in full correspondence and perfect communion with the spiritual resources of a perfect Church might indeed be able to withstand the most debasing and demoralising circumstances. But we live in a society so rent and fissured by social, intellectual, and religious cleavages that its individual members are constantly deprived of the moral and spiritual resources which they need for the true control of their lives. The flaws in society which give rise to exceptional difficulties in the lives of individuals usually place those individuals in positions of isolation which deprive them of the help needed to overcome their difficulties.

The true social order would safeguard character doubly. It would both develop the capacity and ability of its members, and temper the strain upon their moral and spiritual natures to their strength and endurance. Our present system of competitive industrialism fails in

both respects. Some it sends untrained and undisciplined to demoralising labour. Some it allows to live for ever in sheltered ease. Some it stimulates to an over-development of the self-centred virtues and a neglect of the qualities upon which social unity and happiness depend. Only a few are by their very manner of living invited and encouraged to live for their fellows as they have it in them to do, and as many even now desire to do.

CHAPTER V

COMPETITION AND "SOCIAL REFORM" LEGISLATION

IN the preceding chapters stress has been laid both upon the good and bad aspects of competition. That it contains bad elements is almost universally admitted, but the crucial problem at issue is whether the good outweighs the bad, or at least whether good and bad are not so inextricably interwoven that the one cannot be uprooted without the other.

The remainder of the book will discuss the rival claims of those who urge that competition must be mended and those who urge that it must be ended. There are some who maintain that all that is bad in competition could be eliminated by a sane and far-reaching policy of "Social Reform" legislation. The obvious merits of Social Reform will be put forward first, while the latter part of the

chapter will contain certain criticisms of it. There are others who hold that all Social Reform legislation is merely tinkering with the question, and that the one thing needed is the complete abolition of the competitive system and the substitution of Socialism in its place. This claim will be examined in Chapter VI. There are others, again, who claim that no legislative action can deal effectively with the problem, and that what is needed is the substitution of new motives for old. This claim will be examined in Chapters VII and VIII, while Chapter IX will examine the claim that the main solution for the evil of competition is to be found in Education.

It has often been said that the legislation passed between the years 1906-14 was of a Socialistic nature. Nothing could be further from the mark, and nothing could show more clearly the popular confusion of mind in regard to State Socialism. The root-idea of State Socialism is the abolition of all possibility of private profit by putting the whole of the industries of the country into the hands of the State. Most of the legislation between

the years 1906-14 was only a further extension of the old Radical programme, and its chief aim has been to bring the bad and unenterprising manufacturer up to the level of the good and enterprising manufacturer, by insisting upon certain common rules to be applied to all businesses. The statesmen who were chiefly responsible for this Social Reform legislation were anxious to leave individual initiative untouched, and trusted to the stimulus of private profit as a driving force strong enough to get the work of the community carried out. They were conscious of the evil aspects of competition, but they believed that the worst features of it could be eliminated by more humane methods of State control and State regulation. They were confident that it was possible to abolish poverty, or at least reduce it to insignificant proportions, while leaving the main fabric of the competitive system untouched.

The leaders of "Social Reform" legislation are confident that all that is needed for the abolition of poverty is more legislation similar in nature to that which is already upon the Statute-book. They are conscious that such

legislation as has been already passed has been rendered possible only by the ever-growing co-operation between the State and those engaged in industry, whether they be employers of labour or workpeople. The legislation already passed offers a protecting hand to the individual from the cradle to the grave, and a brief review of recent legislation will show both what has been done and what remains yet to be done.

Take first of all the ever-growing efforts to secure that all infants shall have from their birth a reasonable chance of good health. In 1914 grants were made from the State to schools for mothers and infant welfare societies, and these, together with invalid kitchens, aim at providing better food for the mother during the months of pregnancy, and better medical advice both at birth and during the infant's early years. The maternity benefit under the National Health Insurance Act, though still small in amount, was deliberately designed to enable better care and attention to be given to the mother and the child, while the regulations for improving the quality of the midwives, the notification of births, and the system of health visitors under

the local medical officers of health are all playing an effective part. The best medical authorities are confident that a further extension of legislation and of education in health could secure that almost every child should start at birth with its fair share of health.

Then, again, both the physical and the mental welfare of children at school have been increasingly better provided for of recent years. The medical inspection of school-children, physical training, the school clinic, and the feeding of necessitous school-children have all tended to improve the health of the school-child. And all educationists are working hard to see that the size of the classes shall be so reduced that teachers shall be able to carry on their educational work more effectively. It is the withholding of money which is the chief obstacle to securing that the mental education in school hours of the poorest child in the land shall be as good as that which is open to the children of the rich.

If the years between birth and fourteen are all-important to the physical life of the child, the years between fourteen and eighteen are

all-important in the psychical or spiritual life of the child. "Adolescence," says Stanley Hall, "is the period of psychical infancy." So far legislation has done little to give a real equality of opportunity to all children between these ages. While the rich and well-to-do keep their children at school from fourteen to eighteen, and often longer, the great mass of children are flung out into the industrial world at the age of fourteen and thus lose much of what they gained from their early education.

Legislation is needed to ensure that all children are kept under control and discipline until the age of eighteen. Part of their time might well be spent in the factories or workshops, but it would have to be under strict control, while the rest of their time might be spent in schools which would both teach them to understand the elements of their trade, and at the same time give to them the foundation of a civic education.

Already the After-care Committee and the Juvenile Advisory Committee are doing something to ensure that children when they begin work shall, as far as possible, take up the kind of work for which they are mentally and

physically fitted. Industrial unrest is due to a variety and complexity of causes, but not least among them is the fact that so many people drift into work which is quite unsuited to their natural bent and disposition.

Further legislation is needed to secure that industrial work shall be better adapted to the nature and needs of the adolescent. There are many industries which deliberately exploit boys and girls by employing them at purely mechanical work until eighteen, and then turning them adrift. Such work might be made illegal, while the compulsory continuation school would help to secure that young workers should learn, not just one section of their trade, but the whole. Hitherto it has been the amount which the adolescent could produce which has been the decisive factor in his occupation. In future the chief stress should be laid upon the nature of the work as training him for adult life, and the State would have to come in to co-operate with the parent and the employer. Already what is called the educational ladder enables those few children who combine great mental capacity with grit and determination to climb

their way from elementary school to University. But larger maintenance grants are required to enable the poorest to do this, while at present the boy or girl who develops late and so does not win a scholarship to the secondary school loses any chance of a University education. When all children are educated up to eighteen this will be partly remedied, while the number of scholarships to Universities might be so increased that, instead of a ladder to be climbed by a few, there would be a broad highway from school to the University.

Legislation of recent years has already been tackling the problem of low wages for the adult. Through the Trade Boards Act a minimum wage has already been established in certain low-paid industries,¹ and an extension of this would go far to secure that a fairly high minimum wage should be paid to every adult worker who is employed at all. The Labour Exchanges already have taken in hand the problem of casual labour, and, thanks

¹ See "Studies in the Minimum Wage," published by G. Bell and Sons, especially "Minimum Rates in the Tailoring Industry," by R. H. Tawney.

to recent scientific researches,¹ it seems clear that casual work could be abolished by a more scientific organisation of industry.

Though the causes of unemployment are hard to unravel, yet by means of an extension of the National Insurance Act, Part II, dealing with Unemployment Insurance, some of the worst evils of unemployment might be remedied, though it is doubtful whether any Social Reform legislation could guard against the tragedy of men willing and able to work being unable to obtain it. To pay a man insurance money when he is out of work is obviously only a partial solution to unemployment.

There is no doubt that scientific thought and a strong public opinion can practically abolish low wages, casual labour, and the worst evils of unemployment. State action could ensure that all work should be as well paid and as regular in its nature as is employment in the lower grades of the Civil Service or in the best-managed factories.

If there were some who refused to work,

¹ See "Unemployment," W. H. Beveridge. Published by Longmans.

these could be dealt with partly by the pressure of public opinion and partly by a wise and humane system of labour colonies combined with physical and trade training.

So, too, by an extension of the Factory Acts the actual condition of factories during working hours might be enormously improved. Modern methods of ventilation and more light and sunshine might be introduced, while a knowledge of psychology would enable us to determine what length of hours would guard against fatigue.¹ A universal eight-hour or even seven hour day is by no means inconceivable, and it would leave men and women with more time to enjoy the best that there is in art and literature, and might give an enormous impetus to such work as that of the Workers' Educational Association. Something, too, could be done to improve the character and quality of industrial and commercial work. Some occupations which are both useless and degrading might be abolished by legislation. In the case of other occupations employers of labour might do much to make the work more interesting than it is at present, while in yet

¹ J. Goldmark, "Fatigue and Efficiency." New York, 1913.

other cases Trade Unionism might secure that men were given more scope and initiative in their work and a greater share of control in the management of the factory. The foreman might be elected by the men themselves, and something of the intolerable burden of specialisation might be lessened by enabling men to change at times from one process to another.

Hardly any limit can be set to the possible improvement of conditions of life outside the factories. The whole of the slums might be pulled down and towns replanned with open spaces and little gardens. Improved methods of transit would enable workers to live out in the country with fair-sized gardens of their own, and travel in and out to their work as is already done in many places. An extension of the National Health Insurance Act would give the opportunities of health to all. Tuberculosis, it is known, could be easily stamped out, while healthy houses and healthy factories, good food and good clothing, would enormously improve the physique of the nation. Widows could be properly pensioned out of national funds, and orphans given the best education

that money could provide, while the State and local authorities might give opportunities for enjoying the best of art, music, and literature to a population which was no longer too tired to enjoy it. Such a policy of Social Reform legislation might be summed up as follows:—

In the first place, by means of a genuine and universal State system of education all the citizens might start upon their life career with equal educational facilities, however much they differed in natural ability. At present the competitive system does not get fair play, because many of those who are best fitted to become directors of industry are hopelessly handicapped by lack of education.

In the second place, whenever competition failed to work, the State would intervene and either break down the monopoly, or, if necessary take over the industry itself. The principle would be laid down that the work of the community could be carried out most efficiently by private individuals working for private profit and under proper State supervision. The State would only become a manufacturer itself when competition failed to work effectively through unfair combinations

of employers and employed, or by reason of some monopoly element.

In the third place, the State would lay down certain minimum conditions of wages, health, employment, etc., which would be compulsory upon all employers. By this device backward or harmful industries would either be eliminated or brought up to the level of the good.

Lastly, through a more stringent system of graduated taxation and through an increase in the death duties all undue profits would be transferred to the community as a whole, and out of the fund thus raised far-reaching communal experiments in education, sanitation, housing, and the like would be carried out.

In the policy sketched out above there is nothing that is either visionary or fantastic. Almost every scientific student of the problem of poverty realises that poverty could be practically abolished by the introduction of scientific methods of organisation and wise State control.

It is sometimes urged against such a policy that it is materialistic and therefore unworthy of the support of the Christian Church. In

some religious circles there are still to be found people who regard a "Social Reform" policy as alien to a religion which is primarily concerned with the welfare of the immortal human soul.

But the growth of our knowledge of psychology, and of the relation of the material environment to man's spiritual nature, has convinced most thoughtful people that one cannot divide the world into what is material and what is spiritual, and then treat them as two separate worlds. Most men, in order to realise to the full their spiritual nature, need good food, adequate clothing, some leisure, work that is interesting and not exhausting, some possibility of travel, and above all some contact with Nature and the works of Nature.

Considerable confusion has arisen in the minds of many people owing to a misinterpretation of the word "poverty" as used in the New Testament. That a man should not be cumbered with material possessions is essential to the spiritual life, but modern poverty as seen in slum life is one of the greatest enemies of religion. There is no comparison between poverty in Palestine

and poverty in a modern slum. The poorest Jew in Palestine had abundance of fresh air and sunshine and lived in immediate contact with Nature and her handiwork. Sickness was the worst feature of poverty, and it is well to remember that Jesus Christ was known to His contemporaries as the healer of men's bodies. And though the Son of Man had not where to lay His head, yet both at the carpenter's shop and in His ministry He had work that gave expression to His personality.

So, too, though St. Francis of Assisi chose Poverty as his bride, yet the value of it lay in his own voluntary choice, and the act would have lost all its value had it been forced upon him by compulsion. Nor was it even poverty in the modern sense of the word, seeing that he had always the background of that culture which he had acquired in his early years, nor was his work either degrading or deadening. And in so far as to many men the chief anxiety of poverty comes from the care of wife and children, it is well to remember that this was a responsibility from which St. Francis of Assisi was freed.

The modern campaign against poverty is

at its best an endeavour to give to every man and woman the material environment which is needed as the basis of the "good life," the true life of the spirit. While men and women are immersed in a blind struggle for existence it will always be difficult, if not impossible, for any but a few to mind spiritual things, and the religious aspect of Social Reform lies in its endeavours to give opportunity for free play to the spiritual nature of man by bringing the material environment more into harmony with man's true self.

A wise policy of "Social Reform" would ease the strain of industrial competition and get rid of the worst features of poverty, and it is little wonder that so many of the best and most truly religious men and women are throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the effort after Social Reform.

We have emphasised both the practicability and the value of Social Reform legislation, which, as we have seen would remove some of the worst evils of the competitive system. But it is important that if we join in it and throw our energies into it, we should also realise that by itself it is inadequate and one-

sided, and that in some important respects it fails to strike at the roots of the evil.

In the first place, a Social Reform programme, when taken by itself, must necessarily rely in a large measure upon force as opposed to persuasion. If we look at the history of social legislation in the past we are struck with the important part which coercion has played. Large and powerful minorities have had to be coerced to carry through successfully such legislation as the Factory Acts, the Workmen's Compensation Act, and the Trades Boards Act. A large staff of inspectors and an elaborate system of fines have been found necessary, and whenever the pressure of inspection is relaxed the old evils constantly break out again.

Further, the greater the volume of such Social Reform legislation, the greater is likely to be the opposition of those members of the employing and moneyed classes who do not recognise the claim of the community to regulate their private interests. There is a sufficient number of these persons to make State control more and more difficult as the amount of it increases. Inspection would be evaded, and measures devised

for the limitation of profit circumvented, as in the case of gas and railway companies in the past. For this purpose wealthy men would still continue to buy up the needy and clever people who can always be found ready to prostitute intellect to the service of selfishness. Further, under any system of State control there would still be the same incentive to accumulate fortunes rapidly by dishonest means, by clever unscrupulous financial methods, and by exploitation of backward countries. Some captains of industry would continue to look upon work merely as a means to their own ends, and in their desire to accumulate wealth rapidly would not shrink from introducing fresh forms of distasteful and degrading work. State control would always, as it were, come panting breathlessly behind, outpaced by the lightning quickness of those whose brains are being applied to the task of building up fortunes.

And even granted that we could devise an effective system of State control, we should still have to face an ever-growing antagonism between Capital and Labour. For the roots of the distrust that exists between these two

parties are to be found in the system of private profit. So long as the employing classes work for the sake of private gain, or even to make more than other people, so long will Labour continue to regard them with suspicion. At the present time there are many employers who care little or nothing for making money, and who have a genuine philanthropic desire to make the conditions of those who work under them as good as it possibly can be made; and yet these same employers have to confess that their men often regard their best efforts with suspicion. If they reduce the hours of labour, or if they adopt more economical and humane methods of work, the employees look upon it as a fresh device on the part of the master to make money out of them. During the present war the country has realised that men who would willingly work their hardest for the sake of their country in the production of munitions are reluctant to put forth their best efforts to enrich their employers. No one who has made friends with intelligent, thoughtful artisans can fail to be struck with the deep-rooted suspicion they so often cherish towards their employers, a suspicion so deep-rooted as

to render impossible many reforms that are otherwise most desirable. Nor is it of any real help for the middle and upper classes to repeat the pathetic and fallacious statement that the interests of Labour and Capital are really identical. As human nature is at present, the majority both of masters and men wish to make the maximum gain from the business, and in the bargaining between the employer and Trade Unions the victory goes to the side which is most strongly organised. In a system which is based upon private profit the interests of the masters and men can never be identical, and the antagonism between Capital and Labour can never find a satisfactory solution.

There are ominous signs of a coming conflict between Labour and Capital, with the working classes arrayed upon one side and the middle and upper classes on the other. And even if we do not get so direct a class war, and even if, as seems more likely, many members of the middle and upper classes act as apparent traitors to their own class, and are led by the force of social sympathy to back up the claims of Labour, still, none

the less, the struggle would be likely to be severe.

So long, too, as masters work for the sake of private profit, so long will the opposition of the men to what they call "wage slavery" continue. The massing together of men in large factories necessarily implies that a few men give orders and a great number receive them. We may get a great extension of democratic control in factories. Foremen may be elected by the men, and there may be a court of appeal against arbitrary dismissals. But if employers are still out to make private profit they will always have to rely, not upon the willing co-operation of fellow-workers, but upon compulsion. The only true discipline is that which comes from a common subjection to a purpose which all share, and under the present economic system this will always be prevented by the cleavage of interests between Capital and Labour.

CHAPTER VI

COMPETITION, SOCIALISM AND SYNDICALISM

THE difficulties which have been put forward in the last chapter with regard to Social Reform legislation have led a growing number of people to the belief that the only possible remedy is to abolish all opportunities for private profit by "the nationalisation or municipalisation of all the means and instruments of production." This is what is known as State Socialism, and would involve the taking over and the ownership by the State of all the railways, mines, docks, factories, etc. It is a means to an end, a means whereby wealth could be more scientifically distributed by preventing private individuals from making large profits out of the work of their fellow-creatures. This State Socialism has enlisted the sympathy of large numbers of thoughtful and disinterested Englishmen of all classes. It has

been claimed for it that it would abolish the "wasteful and brutal method of competition, and substitute for it the saner and sweeter way of mutual help and co-operation." It is a claim which is so important that we must examine it in some detail.

If all the means and instruments of production were in the hands of the community, it would, of course, be impossible for an employer to employ in a private capacity other individuals, at least on a large scale. For what brings workers into factories to work under private employers is the existence of machinery owned by private individuals. If the State owned all the machinery and all the instruments of production it would also be the only employer on a large scale. Nor could anyone work any longer for private profit in the usual sense of the phrase. Present-day employers entice people to work in their factories by offering them a fixed sum of money, and employers, in return for the risks which they run, claim to take for themselves all the profits over and above this fixed sum. Working for private profit in this sense of the word would be compulsorily abolished, and

thus some of the difficulties mentioned in the preceding chapter would disappear.

It has often been urged against State Socialism that it is based upon fundamentally false ethical ideas, that it runs in glaring contradiction to the divine commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," and that it is nothing else but pure robbery.

To this many modern ethical writers have replied that the ultimate sanction of property is its value in raising the quality of human life. Some amount of private property is clearly needed for the expression of a man's personality, and probably no one nowadays believes in pure Communism. The only question at issue is that of "how much." Should property for instance include stocks and shares, or the control of a factory employing many thousands of people? The general principle that the State has a right to limit private property has been generally recognised in all modern societies, as can be seen in the income-tax and the death duties. The right of a man to hold property must clearly be judged by reference to the common good, and every modern State admittedly

has the right to break up a monopoly if it is contrary to the public good. It is a matter for careful investigation to determine how far the present accumulation of capital in private hands is in the best interests of the community.

Further, if the community decides that fresh limitations upon the possession of private property are needed, the statesman will have to consider most carefully the question of the equitable treatment of existing vested interests and the amount of compensation that is fair and reasonable. But to argue that all property must remain in its present hands because any change would be robbery is to forget that property was made for man, and not man for property.

But even though the question of the rights of property does not offer any fundamental moral obstacle to State Socialism, there are other and more serious difficulties which remain. In the first place, we should have the same difficulties of control that we had under a policy of Social Reform, only in a more aggravated shape. The men with great powers of initiative who have built up large industries

have never been hostile to Social Reform legislation, and have often done their best to promote it. Model factories, high wages, and the like have helped, and not hindered, the men of ability. It has only been the lesser men of mediocre ability and of little enterprise who have opposed Social Reform. But the captains of industry would be likely violently to object to a State Socialism which would cut at the roots of any possibility of making fortunes. One of the great problems would be how far the State could successfully deprive these people of the opportunities of making fortunes, and at the same time secure their loyal service in the task of State production. And if the State could not secure their co-operation, could it do without them, especially if they remained as a hostile element in the community?

It may be urged that the State could easily educate a fresh race of captains of industry. Ability is not limited to the handful of men who control modern industry. Unfortunately, no education in technical schools or colleges can train men to be heads of great businesses. It can, it is true, lay the foundation, but there

is needed also years of experience in business. The State could not suddenly supply fully trained men, and the transitional period at least would be fraught with danger.

Especially would this be so in the case of businesses where there was international competition, and where foreign captains of industry would be competing against raw and newly trained State officials at home.

In order to get rid of poverty the community needs to produce more rather than less wealth, and the problem for solution is— Could such increased wealth be produced if the men of initiative refused to co-operate? It is true that invention might be greatly stimulated by means of State encouragement, but it is one thing to make new inventions and another thing to get them introduced in face of the ordinary inertia of mankind. In the past this has been done by the initiative and push of captains of industry stimulated by the hope of great gains. Compulsory State Socialism, or the coercion of the wealthy and enterprising by democracy, might mean that less instead of more would be produced, and though we might have eliminated the waste in competition,

we might lose infinitely more than we gained from a general falling off in the keenness of business enterprise.

Government enterprise in every land is fettered by routine, red tape, and an adherence to precedent. The essence of industrial progress is the taking of risks, and at present there is a feeling deeply rooted in the minds of most people that no Government should be allowed to take risks, seeing that it is not its own money with which it is playing, but the money of the citizens. Before industrial progress could be made by the State this false antithesis between the State and its citizens would have to be broken down, and a real faith in the State substituted for the present jealous and hostile suspicion.

Nor would the mere abolition of private profit by itself abolish competition. Within each industry those who desired to be more rich, or more famous, or more powerful than others would still compete fiercely to get posts as foremen or managers, while others would struggle to escape from strenuous and distasteful duties and to secure fat and comfortable administrative posts. So, too, different in-

dustries might also compete one with another to get the maximum amount of remuneration at the expense of the community by continually forcing up prices. In short, competition, though its outward nature might be changed, would still remain as a powerful and disturbing force.

Then, again, the method of carrying on such State and municipal experiments as the Post Office, tramways, or electricity gives reasonable ground for the charge that Socialism, while destroying the initiative of the rich, would result also in making slaves of the mass of people. The second-class civil servant does not feel that he has gained in initiative by coming under the State. Nor is it enough to reply that the State is at present under a *bourgeoisie* form of government, and that it would be better under a really democratic one, for a mere extension of democratic control would not in itself increase the liberty of the individual.

Of recent years many of the most thoughtful Socialists have realised that the mere working under the State, instead of under private employers, would not of itself increase the joy

of work or give greater scope to individual initiative. Businesses on a large scale are needed to create such an amount of material wealth as is required by the community, and the problem is how to combine large-scale production with personal freedom and initiative, and it is to meet this problem that the Syndicalist and the Guild Socialist school has arisen.

The word Syndicalism, which came over from France, has often been identified, to some extent unjustly, with the violent method of sabotage and with the general strike;¹ but it also stands for a movement which aims at bringing more self-government into methods of production and has been embodied in such catchwords as "the mines for the miners." In the French Syndicalism there has usually been a deep undercurrent of hostility both to the State and to State Socialism. A more typically English development has been a movement which is beginning to be known as Guild Socialism, and which combines State Socialism with a more democratic method

¹ See "Syndicalism in France," L. Levine. New York, 1914.

of organising State industries.¹ The State is to be the ultimate owner of all the means and instruments of production, but each group of producers is to be responsible for the actual working of its own industry. The State has to be supreme owner, otherwise one powerful group, such as the miners, might be able to exploit its monopoly position. But within these limits each group of producers is to form a co-operative society, managing its own business on a thoroughly democratic basis. The greatest possible amount of initiative is to be given to each group of workers, and in the framing of decisions each group is to make its own contribution, thus enabling each man to feel that upon himself as a member of his group rests the success or failure of the business.

That Syndicalism would allow greater scope for human initiative than State Socialism is undeniable, and it must be looked upon as an important advance upon the older types of State Socialism. But it is open to many of the

¹ See "The World of Labour," G. D. H. Cole. G. Bell & Sons. "National Guilds," A. A. Orage. G. Bell & Sons.

objections which we have already raised in the case of State Socialism. All human institutions require for their successful working mutual subordination and self-sacrifice. No artificial changing of the framework of society would succeed if the members of that society remained unchanged. It is the desire for the greatest possible amount of material wealth which has led to the nineteenth-century civilisation, and especially this desire on the part of the clever, the strong, and the successful. A democracy animated by the same motive might, it is true, by successfully combining together overthrow the present economic organisation. But would it fare better without a deeper transformation in human nature? It is with this problem that the next chapter will deal.

CHAPTER VII

COMPETITION AND HUMAN MOTIVES

WE have seen in earlier chapters that the competitive system is defended upon the ground that it is adapted, as no other system is, to the facts of human nature. The work of the world must be carried out, and men will only do it, it is claimed, either to get more wealth, or power, or fame than other people, or for the sake of material reward.

So long as these are the motives which animate men to work, so long will the fundamental evils of competition remain, though they may be tempered or mitigated by Social Reform legislation, or by Socialism or Syndicalism.

What is needed is a change of heart with regard to the motives for work. It is because the motives for which men work are wrong that the system which is the expression of

these motives is wrong also. In a genuine commonwealth all work should be performed either from a desire to carry out God's work in the world, or from a desire to serve the community, or from the joy of creation—or in many cases from all three motives. Indeed, for a Christian there must always be some joy in work and some sense of serving the community in any work that is carried out in obedience to God's will.

A great deal of the world's work is already done from one or other of these motives. The missionary goes out to foreign lands because he feels a call from God and finds that his real vocation lies in the mission field. This is true of many social workers and many religious workers at home. All that they ask is sufficient money to keep their bodies in health and their souls vital. They are in no way influenced by the desire to get more money, or more fame, or more power than other people. All that they desire is to make the world a better place to carry out what they believe to be God's work. So, too, many statesmen, and many workers in the field of Trade Unionism or friendly societies or other co-

operative effort, put forward their best efforts simply and solely from a desire to serve the community. This is true of not a few business men who feel that they are serving God and the community by putting in good work, like the old Quaker grocer who sold tea and butter and sugar *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.

So, too, the joy of work is to be found in a great many spheres, and above all in the field of art. The painter and the craftsman will often work for a totally inadequate remuneration, if only they can express in plastic form that image of the beautiful which has been granted to their inner vision. In the case of the poet one finds sometimes the sheer joy of creating the beautiful; at other times one gets an admixture of something of that joy which all great teachers feel, as when Wordsworth writes of his poems: "I trust their destiny is to console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, to teach the young and gracious of every age to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more actively and more securely virtuous." Sometimes, as in this case or in the case of Watts and Morris,

the joy of work is less of a motive than the desire to carry out God's work, or to render service to humanity; sometimes, as in the case of other artists, the sheer joy of work has first place. In the world of business, too, there are many men who find real pleasure in their work. Sometimes the pleasure is that of the craftsman; at other times the sheer love of activity and sense of adventure takes first place.

It may, of course, be urged that there is much work which is so distasteful and so full of drudgery that men can only be expected to put forward their best efforts in it under the stimulus of competition or private profit. That there is great weight in this objection cannot be denied, but we must remember that much work that is full of drudgery can be made full of interest if it can be made to be the expression of a real purpose. If a man has to labour merely in order to enrich the wealthy, or to create objects which he knows to have no intrinsic value, then even work that is full of variety will seem dull and distasteful. On the other hand, if a man feels that the work which he is doing is directly helping his country,

then work that is monotonous can yet be full of interest. This is, indeed, one of the lessons of the war, that men and women will work with quite a different spirit when they feel that the work which they are doing is of direct value to their country.

And yet it must be admitted that there will always remain some work which is needed by society and yet which is dull and monotonous and incapable of giving any expression to a man's personality. There is and always will be work of the kind which the Bible quite rightly ranks as part of the curse on man. "I am profoundly convinced of the dignity of labour," remarks the sentimental gentleman in "Man and Superman." "That's because you've never done any," is the chauffeur's perfectly just reply. But, instead of condemning part of the population to do such work all the time, we might call on all the population to do such work part of the time, and so give to all some time at least for work which may be prompted partly by the joy of doing it.

But even if all distasteful work could not be abolished, yet it is clear that many of the

worse features of the present industrial system would disappear if the motives enumerated above were substituted for the purely competitive motives.

But what of involuntary competition? As we have seen before, it would be impossible to abolish this altogether. So long as each man receives any reward for his labours he must be indirectly competing with others for a share in the world's wealth. It is true that the present unequal distribution of rewards intensifies enormously the results of involuntary competition, but even if every man received exactly the same amount of material reward for his labour (a state of things which we regard as neither possible nor desirable), some amount of involuntary competition would still remain.

But the evil of involuntary competition comes from the desire on the part of men and women to get the greatest possible amount of material goods for themselves, or to live up to the standard of life of their class or to go beyond it. And what is needed is a change of heart with regard to material goods. We shall never get rid of the evils

of involuntary competition until men and women demand only such an amount of material goods as is necessary to enable them to carry out effectively the work which God has given them to do. At present society believes wholeheartedly that men should be remunerated in accordance with their energy or ability. If we are clever and able, and have a stronger economic pull than others, we think that we deserve more than others, and should insist upon getting it. Hence those who are strong and clever and whose work is generally more interesting, get the greatest remuneration, while those who are physically weak and whose work is uninteresting get the least.

The passing of the Trade Boards Act, and the growing advocacy of the minimum wage, show how rapidly we are tending to believe that the basis of remuneration should be what the worker needs. Unfortunately, the upholders of the doctrine of the minimum wage have not yet got beyond the idea of the minimum as being the minimum necessary for physical health. We want to go further, and claim that what is needed for all men is such a sum as will enable them to satisfy

not only their physical needs but their spiritual needs as well. We need not only sunshine and fresh air and good food, but all that material setting through which our personality can find full play. This is not to claim that all men should receive equal remuneration. Much would depend upon the nature of the work. Work that was exhausting, such as the work of a coal-miner, would need not only shorter hours, but pay sufficient to allow for physical and mental recreation. Work that put a great strain upon the spiritual vitality, such as the work of a Cabinet Minister, or an administrator, or a director of a large industry, would clearly need differential treatment. A large residence or a special motor-car might be put at the service of the Cabinet Minister during his period of office, but these would be his due not because he was more clever or more able, but because they were needed by him to carry out his work effectively.

But we are not here concerned with an administrative programme, except just in so far as we must have some glimpse of the ideal way of life as a background for our thinking. Our main business here is to lay

stress upon the need for a change of heart in the individual, and society will never be able to alter its basis of remuneration until individuals have changed their attitude towards material things. There is an urgent call for individuals who will set an example to the nation by demanding as remuneration, not what their competitive ability or monopoly value will enable them to get, but what they believe is necessary for them to carry out their work in the world effectively. There are others for whom it may be impossible to receive less than the current wage or salary of their class. But such men can also "do their bit" by resolutely refusing to expend upon themselves more than they need in order to live the good life, and by giving away the surplus for wise national purposes. The moral injustice inherent in the present distribution of wealth is due to the fact that some men receive more than they need, while others receive less. And the first step on the part of the individual Christian must be to determine either not to receive or not to spend upon himself more than he really needs. All this implies a spiritual revolution in our

ideas and a deeper hold upon spiritual values. Men nowadays demand a spacious house that they may be ab'e to express their personality, but once we lived in real communion with God we should substitute the spaciousness of the eternal for that of the temporal.

It is significant that the best Socialists have always laid stress, not upon the machinery of State Socialism, but upon the right motives for work. It is to the Socialists that we owe our idea that goods should be produced, not for the sake of private profit, but for the use of the community, and it is the Socialists who have insisted that the true basis of industrial life should be—"From each man according to his ability, and to each man according to his need." Men like William Morris have never been weary of insisting that all men should find their true joy in the spirit of the craftsman and creator, and not in material rewards and profits.

In all this, Ethical Socialism is essentially a religious doctrine. It has much in common with the true Christian conception of work, except that its emphasis is often laid rather more upon the joy of work and of service

to the community than upon the idea of vocation or the carrying out of God's work in the world.

Not only in other spheres, but also in the industrial sphere, the *imitatio Christi* consists in a deeper realisation of Christ's words—"My Father worketh hitherto and I work." If the compelling motive of all work was the desire to help to carry out God's work in the world, the whole basis of modern competition would disappear, while the adoption of the spirit which underlies the words "from each man according to his ability, to each man according to his need," would take away all that is bad in "involuntary competition."

It may be asked—What economic form would society then take? That it would have to work through institutions and outward forms is clear. Economic institutions and outward forms when truly conceived are not hindrances, but helps in the good life. For a change of heart in any group of people cannot be vital without expressing itself in organisations, and if the organisations are such as to correspond to the changed heart they serve as a help to others, being the inward good, as

it were, expressed in outward form. The change in outward form would of necessity be a progressive one, changing as the inward purpose of society changed.

But what outward form would the ideal Society ultimately take? There are some who think that it would correspond very closely to the pattern which Guild Socialists have described, while there are others who think that the application of Christian principles to the economic framework of Society would so revolutionise it that no present day "anticipations or forecast" would be adequate to describe it. It may well be that a Society so brutalised by competitive methods as is our present Society is incapable of apprehending the goal. But whatever was its outward form its value and its stability would depend upon the change of heart rather than upon the change of external form, which is only an outward expression of what is inward and spiritual.

CHAPTER VIII

COMPETITION AND HUMAN NATURE

“The common problem, yours, mine, everyone’s,
Is—not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be—but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means: a very different thing!
No abstract intellectual plan of life
Quite irrespective of life’s plainest laws,
But one a man who is a man and nothing more
May lead within a world which (by your leave)
Is Rome or London, not Fool’s Paradise.”

To the proposals hitherto suggested two fundamental objections will be raised, first, that in practice they will not work, as they run contrary to human nature, and, secondly, even if they would, they would make life intolerably dull.

In the above lines Browning’s Bishop Blougram well expresses the impatience common-sense feels with all those ideals of conduct or social organisation which seem to ignore the fundamental facts of human nature.

And possibly many will find something of this remoteness from fact in the conclusions of the previous chapters. They will feel that no presentation of what ought to be can have real value and meaning unless it is based squarely and securely upon what is and what can be. A Christian ideal dare not blind itself to facts and must be relevant to human capacity. It is useless to refuse to face the imperfections and limitations of our nature because of the disillusionment which their consideration brings. And is not this an error which former chapters have committed? The ideal man and the ideal society would not be moved by self-interest, but by higher motives. What then? The ideal man would also not need the constraint of law or even the discipline of education. And just as the politician and the educationist are not on that account absolved from dealing with the perversity and stupidity of real men as they are, so, it is urged, we must recognise that man in the bulk is always and will always be moved predominantly by motives of self-advancement. Ideals apart, human nature prescribes definite lines to all fanciful schemes

of social regeneration. Human nature, we are told, is permanent and constant, and an ineradicable feature of it is seen in this fact, that to get the best work out of a man you must always appeal in some way or another to his self-interest.

Like all such appeals from idea to fact, this reminder has its salutary as well as its misleading and dangerous side. It is salutary in so far as it warns against a mere theoretic satisfaction, against over-indulgence in flimsy abstractions and vague Utopias. And, as will be seen in a moment, there is a true sense in which "Man cannot, therefore he is not obliged," is the true complement of the maxim, "I ought, therefore I can," which Kant found to be at the basis of ethics. Blougram's protest is a call to substitute a more robust practical thought for dream and distant speculation. But at the present time it is much more important to emphasise the mistake with which this is so often combined, its dangerous one-sidedness. Though the ideal must take careful account of things present and actual, it does not owe them deference. The demand it makes must not be fantastic

or inapplicable, but it must be a genuine demand, unweakened by the note of acquiescence. And accordingly the plea that existing evils are inevitable natural flaws inherent in some unchangeable "human nature" must be examined with especial suspicion. In what sense is it true, and where does the danger in it lie?

Human nature is unchanging in this sense, that within wide limits of individual, family, and racial variation there is a rough constancy in the general natural endowment common to human beings. Within these limits we all have the same fundamental emotions and share the same innate tendencies towards certain general modes of behaviour. But a man's full nature, it must be maintained, is more than this original *endowment*, this "greatest common measure" of what is found in all humanity as such. It must mean the use made of this rough natural material, the way it is moulded and organised, the significance that it yields. And in this sense human "nature" may justly be held to be adaptable and plastic, not constant and unchanging. It may be that certain impulses

and emotions—anger, for instance, or fear—are ineradicable elements of our constitution. But their meaning and our judgment upon them wholly depend on the part they play and on the value of the complex states of mind which they help to constitute. *What sort* of anger and *what sort* of fear does a man feel? Reverent fear and disinterested indignation have the same instinctive basis, perhaps, as animal terror and rage, but it is the difference that is important and not the relationship. In the same way many elements of the natural human endowment are altered beyond recognition as the activities to which they contribute develop in meaning and value.

The idea that there is somewhere an immutable human nature, hard and refractory as rock, which nothing can affect or modify, has become so much a commonplace that it is worth while to remember how modern a notion it is. To the reformers of a hundred years ago the opposite doctrine appeared evident. They did not interpret human nature in terms of a permanent natural endowment, but in terms of an ever-improving character. They held that under a proper treatment man

is "perfectible." Their sanguine faith in progress and the power of education may to us appear crude, but it implied a clearer understanding of the mutual influence of individuals and the social order in which they live than is commonly found to-day. For the separation which everyday thought makes between social organisations (regarded as contingent and alterable) and "human nature" (regarded as constant and unchanging) ignores the fact that any type of society is dependent on the prevalent character of the men who compose or have composed it, and will reflect that character. And it tends no less to ignore the complementary influence of social institutions upon individual character. Man's nature is, in part at least, in his own making. Burke's famous plea that "Art is man's nature" may be inverted. A true view of the slow growths of institutions and prerogatives and social standards, while it certainly emphasises the danger of over-rash interference with them, points more strongly still to the obligation and opportunity of reform. It shows that a change in institutions, still more in a whole social organisation, may reveal

new possibilities to character and lead to a new estimate of human limitations. It is plain that the course of progress, political and moral, is full of examples of this. What appears to one generation to be a social or ethical necessity—the institution of slavery, or the duel—is seen by the next but one to be relative to a peculiar and transitory atmosphere or standard, and not to survive the particular society that held to it so firmly.

But if the appeal to the real facts of our nature and the appeal to the lesson of history be dismissed as unconvincing, and the old protest be repeated, then our answer must be plain and unhesitating. We at least must take our stand on the issue that humanity, as we know it, is no fixed and constant quantity. Our ideal is the ideal of Christianity, and whatever be true of reform in general, Christianity, at any rate, stands or falls with a faith in the redemption of man. And are we to admit that individuals can be redeemed and yet assert that society cannot? Such a position is dangerously near an open avowal that Christianity is an esoteric cult, a minority religion, wholly unable to impress itself broadly

upon the world, wholly unable to dominate public life and social conduct. And surely our faith is half-hearted if it leads to such an attitude of pessimism and acquiescence. We must not merely believe in the Kingdom of God, but be able to pray in all sincerity that His Kingdom may come upon earth, holding that with God all things are possible.

Thus we must put aside the protest that we are attempting to change a human nature that cannot be changed. It has been urged that this view takes a rough constancy of natural endowment as equivalent to immutability of developed nature. It has further been urged that the independence of the individual and the social structure and the history of past progress both point to what has been termed "the extraordinary pliability of human nature," and that nothing less will satisfy than the Christian ideal. And, therefore, no objection on general grounds must be allowed to stand in the way of the conclusions reached in previous chapters. The *non possumus* claim must be considered in each case strictly on its merits. It must be asked whether the existing system is based upon defects of our nature

so fundamental that they can neither be eradicated nor transmuted into something higher. Our root moral objection to the present system is that it relies upon an appeal to motives—individual success, selfishness, rivalry—which are incompatible with the Christian demand. But is this incompatibility ultimate? Have we to do with some inevitable human weakness, or can this apparently recalcitrant material be utilised in the service of that ideal which we are striving to take as the standard of our inquiry?

It is, of course, perfectly common to refuse to admit incompatibility at all. The alteration in human nature and motive which on the above view is necessary will then appear not so much a thing desirable but impracticable, as a change which, even if it could be brought about, might bring more harm with it than good. And though, even so, features have to be admitted which it is difficult to reconcile with our thought of a Christian society, many of us are inclined to attribute to our interpretation of the Christian society narrowness and priggishness rather than question our reading of the facts of life

which seem to conflict with it. A good deal can be said on these lines, and the question must be discussed later. But at the present we are concerned with those who do in all sincerity and candour admit that the competitive society which previous chapters have analysed is not a Christian society and cannot become one without some radical change, and who yet are unable to see that any reconciliation is possible. And so, while not quite coming to the conclusion, "so much the worse for Christianity," they yet feel that there is here a discrepancy which makes it, as a social ideal, so far the more remote. The answer to this question must be sought in a consideration of the motives which actually determine human conduct.

We cannot admit the claim that the importance of the motives of personal gain and advancement, encouraged so continually by the present system, need be regarded as woven into the fibre of our nature. Few men were less prone to a facile criticism than John Stuart Mill, yet at the end of a life which had had its full share of disillusionment he could maintain that "the deep-rooted selfishness

which forms the general character of existing society is so deeply rooted only because the whole course of existing institutions tends to foster it.”¹ Here again it is important to grasp the interdependence of the individual and his social organisations, the reaction of institutions upon character. And we would go further than Mill in maintaining that forms of association and industry might be found which, by calling into play other motives than those of self-interest, might refuse the claim that these are the irreplaceable and indispensable motives of action.

For we did not find it possible to doubt the evidence of our clearest and most intimate experience, which protests that self-advancement does *not* give inevitably the strongest, still less the only, motive for work. Rather we must asseverate that man is more truly man when he works from other than selfish motives. Even the man most centred in himself responds to the promptings of some affection or some loyalty every day of his life. It is in devotion to family or friend, in allegiance to a cause, and in dedication to an ideal

¹ Mill “Autobiography” (1870).

that the greatest potency and driving force can be found.

Again, it was hinted in our first chapter that the common insistence upon the necessity for such an appeal to self-interest as is secured by the present competitive system is due in part to confusion of thought. We confound self-regard with selfishness. We tend to ignore the distinction between a proper development of the personality, and a restriction of one's interests to a mere satisfaction of one's own wants and desires, whether this take the form of avarice, ambition, or a fastidious self-culture. On the one side is the legitimate interest a man must feel in the free play and exercise of his faculties, in doing the thing he feels fitted for, in utilising some special aptitude. And though this may easily lead to a selfish pursuit of satisfaction, in itself it is not selfish. The Christian ideal of service is not in the least at war with the ideal of a society in which each individual has the joy in his work that comes from a congenial exercise of the faculties.

Work for the joy of work (of whatever kind the work be) may, indeed, easily conflict with

the demands of a Christian society. But, if so, one of two things must be true. Either the activity is itself necessarily anti-social, and therefore its pursuit selfish, or the degree of absorption of the worker must be anti-social—that is, it must blind him to other claims and obligations. As an example of the former we might consider the financier whose “corner” of some necessary commodity has been the cause of widespread distress. In so far as this consequence has been faced from the outset and accepted as the price to be paid for the increased wealth that he will gain, we should agree that the financier is guilty of gross selfishness, and that (so far) he is an enemy to society. But more commonly the man is actuated far more by the love of excitement, the zest of controlling forces, or of pitting his own judgment and power against those of others, than by cold-blooded desire for profit. Probably he may hardly think of the wealth he will coin at all, nor of the consequences of his action to others—the thing is an adventure and an enterprise. And if this is so, though we should still—and rightly—stigmatise his conduct as selfish,

yet it is selfishness with a difference. The fault here is not a deliberate preference of his own interest to the social good, but an absorption in the work that is itself anti-social, and a degree of absorption that blinds him to all other interests than his own.

The self-interest which, it is asserted, alone can keep men in a social community at work is seen on a closer scrutiny to be mostly of this latter kind. At its best it is simply a narrowness of sympathy and outlook, side by side, very likely, with a genuine life of self-denial within a limited area. The individual is subordinated to the family, but the claims of those beyond this narrow area are for the most part disregarded. Or, our "selfishness" may be, as we have seen, a blindness to the claims of others, fostered by an excessive preoccupation in our own work, which work need not, though it may be, in conflict with the common interest. Usually the preoccupation will be an enforced preoccupation, and not a joyous absorption in some congenial activity. But there, too, it is rather limitation in the area of interest than direct and deliberate selfishness that is the enemy.

And this being so, we cannot admit that we are confronted by any incorrigible defect of human endowment, or by any propensity so radical that it is beyond modification by a changed social system and a more enlightened educational practice.

But it will be felt that the nerve of the matter has not yet been reached. Surely, it will be said, there is something primary and instinctive in competition itself which must be opposed to your uncompromising ideals of co-operation and public service. Is there not a genuinely ineradicable instinct of emulation, bidding one man strive for success against another? And is not this self-regarding in the bad sense, in so far as it means a concentration upon a personal satisfaction to the disregard of wider social advantage?

The counter-claim made on behalf of this competitive element in our nature must be considered presently. Here we have two questions to consider. We have to see how far, and in what sense, there is a real instinct for competition, *i.e.* what is the permanent element that will persist; and, second, how far this "instinct" is one that Christianity can

accept and utilise. Our aim is to show that here, as always, what is unalterable in competition is in no way opposed to the demands of our ideal, while the selfish elements in it that are so opposed are not beyond our power to transmute.

By the competitive instinct, as an element of human psychology, is meant *emulation*, and we may, perhaps, define emulation simply as the *striving to excel* another. The desire to excel clearly does play a huge part as an incentive to every sort of activity. The psychologist was not, perhaps, exaggerating beyond all reason who said that "nine-tenths" of the work of the world is done by it. Taken thus, emulation has a far wider field than competition, as the latter was defined in Chapter I. Men may emulate one another in knowledge, in skill, in the creation of beautiful objects, and in none of these cases is the success of the one *at the expense of the other*, for the field is unlimited. One is first and the other second, and no other advantage is secured over him; he has lost no chance of future success. The difference between this and the case of two firms competing for a market is

important, but it must not be exaggerated. For, as was said in our first chapter, the competitive organisation of our society makes this form of competing inevitably bear its consequences soon or late in fields where objects cannot be possessed in common and where one man's success spells another's loss. And, in any case, the root of the difficulty remains. Even in emulation in art, in knowledge, or in some nobler activity, is there not a taint of self-seeking ?

The resultant problem is one familiar in education. Rousseau, as is well known, would have his Emile trained without ever competing with other boys, even in physical exercise. For emulation, he held, leads to rivalry, and that means jealousy and vanity. Completely one-sided and disproportionate as his account is, it yet puts the main point here at issue squarely and clearly. For there does seem, at a first view, something of vanity and selfishness about emulation when it is made the motive of action. And, at least when we come to the serious work of life, it might be urged that in so far as a man is really disinterested, and, above all, so far as he endeavours to

follow the Christian way of life, he ought not to be considering his own achievement as such at all—in contrast, that is, with that of his neighbour—but should concern himself solely with the realisation of particular ends, by whomsoever they are to be realised. And hence, it may be pleaded, to admit that emulation cannot be eliminated is to acquiesce in a permanent taint of selfishness in human action.

And yet, as the moderns point out, you cannot get rid of it. It is a sheer psychological necessity. Do what you may, the runner will run faster in a race than simply against time. This is an instance, no doubt, of emulation in a field where (as our first chapter explained) it is totally unobjectionable, precisely because there is nothing really at stake. But it serves to illustrate how deep-lying the instinct is. It appears to provide an incentive which we cannot hope to remove, but at best to mitigate.

The answer to the difficulty seems to be found in considering the ambiguity that infects the idea of motive. It is one thing to act from a desire to excel somebody else at some-

thing. It is quite another to act with a view to getting something done (whatever our ultimate motive be) and yet to be stimulated in the activity by the parallel or contrasted activity of others. In the one case the striving to excel, which is emulation, dominates avowedly and explicitly in our consciousness; in the other there need be no explicit or conscious desire at work, or, if there is, it merely serves to strengthen the already existing motive. A distinction, that is, may be drawn between the real motive and the stimulus, the "spur from behind" which may reinforce it.

On this assumption the claims of emulation can be admitted. There will always be a place and a use for it in the service of other purposes and other motives. But if the excelling of the rival becomes the *end aimed at*, if the desire so to excel becomes the motive which actuates the man, then, apart from the particular case of games considered sufficiently in Chapter I, the consequences may well be "falsely exaggerated self-esteem, envy, conceit, or discontent." The extreme case of emulation between two churches illustrates

this. It is contemptible if the object aimed at by each be simply to beat the other. But, no less certainly, behind what might be dismissed at first as jealousy and crude rivalry there may be a very pure and genuine enthusiasm. Emulation gives, then, just that incentive to further effort which inevitably and properly follows the comparison of one's own with another's achievement. The value of this will be dependent on that of the end at which we aim. But such an influence upon our work there must always be. It is the result of man's social nature, the fact that no one can pursue his aim isolated and impervious to the suggestions of this man's efforts or that man's success. His activity is affected at every point by the impact of other lives whose work contrasts or compares with his own.

And because his own work and theirs may be a common one, there need be nothing of selfishness in this emulation. The end need be no private attainment. And there is a point at which it seems to matter little whether we speak of fellow-workers or competitors. Certainly the greatest spirits seem all emulous in this sense ; they draw from the achievements

of others—in seeming perhaps their rivals—
only new strength and new light.

“Assured of worthiness we do not dread
Competitors; we rather give them hail. . . .
So that I draw the breath of fairer air,
Station is naught, nor footways laurel-strewn,
Nor rivals tightly belted for the race.
Good speed to them! My place is here or there;
My pride is that among them I have place:
And thus I keep this instrument in tune.”¹

The metaphor of the race—how individualistic it seems, and how narrowly selfish an aim it suggests! Yet let us think how naturally it is used, not only, as here, to express the dedication of the poet to beauty, but by St. Paul to figure the dedication of the soul to Christ. For there, too, there will be a place for emulation.

The instinct of emulation thus seems to fall into a place analogous to that which belongs to the desire for pleasure. Pleasure is, as Aristotle demonstrated once and for all, something adjectival rather than substantive; there is no such thing as mere pleasure, but only pleasant states or activities. The pleasure, then, supervenes upon the activity as an added

¹ George Meredith, “Internal Harmony.”

perfection. The moral value of the pleasure depends on the moral value of the activity : if the activity is good, the pleasure is good ; if the activity is bad, the pleasure is bad. But when a man finds pleasure in a good act he is thereby stimulated to practise it more diligently and the pleasure increases the good activity. Moreover, all pleasure is good so far as it goes, and is called bad when it arises from bad actions only, because such pleasure would only be felt by a bad man or because it is a stimulus to the bad act.

No man, therefore, is to seek pleasure nor to make it a standard of value. But the wise man, having ordered his life according to virtue, will enjoy all the pleasure which such a life may bring, and the desire for such pleasure he will admit and gratify. But the moment attention fixes on the pleasure instead of the activity, healthy desire has changed into lust. A man must eat because he needs nourishment, and he may just as well eat pleasant food and enjoy it ; but as soon as he eats for the pleasure of eating, he is beginning to be gluttonous.

The true place of emulation seems, as we

said, to be analogous to this. There is the innocent emulation of games (where nothing is at stake, and the very competition is co-operative in spirit, because it assists the enjoyment of both sides), just as there are innocent (*i.e.* morally colourless) pleasures which largely arise from just such emulation or competition. But where anything of consequence is at stake competition is valuable only in so far as it is a spur to good work, and the moment it is made the business of life it becomes evil, as it also does if the place allowed to it results in such competition as involves real loss (as distinguished from failure to achieve) to the beaten party. Thus when a firm is thinking more of its place in the market than of its service to the community by the supply of commodities, competition is evil; and when workmen have to compete with one another for the right to earn a living, competition is evil.

No one denies the former type; indeed, the mere attempt to get rid of it will to many appear Utopian. The existence of the latter type is unfortunately quite as certain. "I feel a real cad," said a bricklayer lately to a

clergyman. "Why?" asked the clergyman. "Well," said the bricklayer, "I have been out of a job for thirteen weeks. And a pal of mine down the road has been out for eight weeks. Yesterday I heard a man was wanted this morning, so I held my tongue, got up early in the morning, and crept past his house so that he shouldn't hear me. And I got the job. But I do feel a cad."

A system which results in that relation between a man and his "pal" is intolerable. It is clear that the competition is in this case deliberate, for it is chosen, but it is only in a superficial sense voluntary, for it is intensely disliked. The motive is merely the desire to get work. Morally, therefore, it is a case of involuntary competition. And unless we hold to the anti-Christian doctrine that because this system is a product of human nature it is unalterable, we are bound to seek a remedy.

If the motives discussed in the last chapter, among which the joy of work and the joy of service were conspicuous, had really free play, they would prove to be among the great driving forces of society, while a place would still be left, though a strictly subordinate

place, for emulation to add an additional impetus to these motives.

The emphasis laid upon the joy of work and the joy of service in itself provides part of the answer to the charge that Christianity, by removing the conditions which lead to the stress of competition, will make life dull and rob it of its zest. But, indeed, Christianity does not propose to substitute for all the strife of the world a drab amiability, but offers in its place the supreme adventure of the Kingdom. This is its alternative—the one and only alternative to war and strife in all their forms.

It is true that the realised Kingdom of God is something that we cannot picture; it lies in a region of spiritual life beyond our present apprehension. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the good things which the Lord hath prepared for them that love Him." But Christians are ready to hope for it through faith in God, and the process of realising it on earth is most undoubtedly an adventure to thrill the boldest.

For a world filled with mild and blameless

folk we have no taste. For a Church that would wish to people the world with such a type of humanity we have no patience. The virile and reckless men, of whom God has made a great many, are quite clear about it. Except they can live dangerously they have no special wish to live at all. If the thrills that come with taking one's life in one's hands are taken away, life itself might as well be taken too. If there is to be no big business afoot to lift us all out of ourselves, we were likely to become a very petty people. War and our endless economic strife may be very hateful, but the alternative to it as many people picture it would seem to be fairly hateful also.

We recall with complete sympathy the feelings of Mr. William James as he emerged from "the famous Assembly Grounds on the borders of Chautauqua Lake," where, he tells us, "I went in curiosity for a day. I stayed for a week, held spellbound by the charm and ease of everything, by the middle-class paradise, without a sin, without a victim, without a blot, without a tear. And yet what was my own astonishment, on emerging into the

dark and wicked world again, to catch myself quite unexpectedly and involuntarily saying, 'Ouf! what a relief! Now for something primordial and savage, even though it were as bad as an Armenian massacre, to set the balance straight again. . . . Let me take my chance again in the big outside worldly wilderness with all its sins and sufferings.'"¹

But what Christ really wanted and asked for was men who with Him would dare to challenge the whole world. What He designed was that the current ways of the world everywhere should be overthrown and that in their place the principles of the Kingdom should be established. He accepted the gauntlet of every evil in the world, however firmly entrenched by custom and greed. He proposed to men the ways of brotherhood instead of the ways of strife, and in so doing He brought Himself into opposition to those very elements in humanity which had seemed most permanent and impregnable. He challenged not merely what was seen to be evil, but even the conventional ways of goodness. It was a quite correct instinct that once made some Greeks

¹ "Talks with Teachers."

say of His followers that they were men who would turn the world upside down. It was Christ's faith that God made the world to be the scene of a life dominated by the fact of brotherhood, and in the name of God He called for followers who would live, and if need be die, in the effort to overthrow whatever denies our brotherhood. He roused against Himself the fury of all classes who had profited by the unbrotherly ways of the past, and that fury has still to be faced by all who accept His leadership.

CHAPTER IX

EDUCATION

THE whole of our discussion has brought us back to the elementary truth that all social progress depends upon a spiritual impetus. We need to secure for the nation citizens whose outlook shall from the beginning be social. For the evils of competition arise mostly, we have found, from the fact that men place excessive value upon material goods. The millennium, or whatever else we like to call it, will come when there is a real change of heart. That, after all, is the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel: "Repent" (which means, change your outlook), "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"—and is ready to come in so soon as men's hearts are attuned to it. In the stress of war men have been brought for the moment to something approaching a social outlook. In numbers hitherto without

parallel the younger men of the country have offered their lives for a great cause, and while there has not been anything approaching the same readiness to sacrifice either profits or wages for the same cause, there has been an immense increase in the spirit of fellowship and the readiness to serve and share. We have seen, in other words, that under great pressure human nature, even when corrupted by long habituation to false standards, is capable of a degree of public spirit upon which we have never counted. There will not always, perhaps there will never again, be anything like the same urgency so far as the material forces and values are concerned. The hope of society lies in discovering some means of eliciting the same spirit in times of peace as has been called forth by the necessities of war. This must be mainly a matter of education, not in the mere sense of schooling, but in the larger sense of the development of all those qualities in a human being which distinguish him from an animal or a machine.

Education in its widest sense is nothing less than the total influence of social surroundings upon the formation of character. So long,

therefore, as society is even imperfect, perfect education is unattainable. We are involved in a circle partly vicious, partly virtuous, The corrupt society corrupts the rising generation, who constitute the society of the ensuing period, passing on to their successors the corruption which they contracted from their predecessors. The same sequence also preserves the virtues and excellence of society.

Our concern, however, must be with those influences which are consciously and deliberately brought to bear upon the characters of the young, to which the name of education in the narrower sense is generally given.

We start from the elementary truth that if we are to become "good" it can only be by effort; left to ourselves, we are, not, of course, guilty, but evil, *i.e.* other than is required for the service of man or God; theologians have called this state original sin. The effort, in the first instance, cannot be ours, for we are incapable of making it. Society by its influences moralises us: if at birth we were taken to live in a savage tribe, we should grow up in unquestioning acceptance of their customs. All that is good about us is given

to us (or drawn out of us) by others—by our country and our Church,—each acting through the agency of certain of its members, our parents and other people in our homes.

In a good home an average child learns quite unconsciously the elementary principles of membership. Surrounded by, and sharing in, a life which all regard as a truly common life, the child learns by easy and even pleasant experience to regard himself as a member of a community in whose good or evil his own welfare or the reverse is included. But this common life must be ready to enforce itself—not angrily, but as a mere matter of course—against any rebelliousness which leads the child to insist on his own desire to the general loss; “being a nuisance” is the commonest form of selfishness at this stage, and the child must be checked from indulging in it.

Receptiveness is the great mark of childhood. There are no critical faculties to test and select among the surrounding influences. But it is the inward spirit, not the outward act, that constitutes the influence—all the more so because the receptivity is not due to conscious imitation, but is altogether

sub-conscious. A child may be "spoilt" by indulgence, and will be so spoilt if the indulgence is given selfishly either to "keep the child quiet" or for the pleasure of wallowing in parental affectionateness. Here, as everywhere else, concentration upon the pleasure of a pleasant action is vicious: to love is the delight of life; but to dwell on the delight, and to act in order to obtain that delight, is to make love itself selfish, and then the actions resulting are selfish at root and will tend to make the child selfish. But if the love is natural and direct it will make the child loving, and love will call out, not selfishness, but love.

Such love is itself a discipline. Where it is strong enough further discipline may be almost unnecessary. But also such love will express itself in sternness and severity if it appears that at the moment there is some tendency in the childish nature which must be repressed or even (if it be too strong for that) eradicated, unless the whole harmony of the nature is to be destroyed. But the child will feel the love behind the severity, however unconsciously, and soon, if not at once, will understand and assent.

Discipline, which only the ordered life of a loving home can properly supply, is the indispensable beginning of education. Without it self-control is almost impossible and selfishness inevitable. The mass of disconnected impulses and instincts which constitute the spiritual nature of the untrained human being must be brought into a harmony, and this must be done from outside, for a chaos cannot organise itself.

But another primary necessity is proper physical development. The ill-developed body is like a violin whose strings are not tuned, and from which it is next to impossible to produce beautiful music. It is irritable and fretful, easily unbalanced and deranged. Healthy food and abundance of open-air exercise are necessary to proper moral development.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of home influences upon the child. The first six years or so have a peculiar importance which is due to the fact that the character is not only more plastic then than at any later stage, but is also still uncritical, and therefore unable to choose between the various influences that play upon it, submitting to some and harden-

ing itself against others. No later education can altogether counteract the influence of the home training; even when it seems to do so, and when children, carelessly or vulgarly brought up at home, appear at school to become public-spirited or refined, there is usually a disappointing reversion to type when school-days are over.

But while the importance of a good home training cannot be exaggerated, it is almost equally impossible to exaggerate the need of supplementing the influence of home when the purely formative stage is past. Honour and loyalty cannot be inculcated by precept. They are learnt spontaneously through life in a society because that society is plainly wrecked by their absence.¹ But children can never be in the full sense members of their homes; they are subordinates, and everything is arranged for them, not by them. There are hardly any parents who could bear to let their children learn by the only efficacious method, that of making their own mis-

¹ Though this is the commonest way of learning loyalty, it does not give the grounds on which loyalty, when learnt, is valued.

takes. So the child at home will never have the responsibility which is a part of full membership. The school must supplement the home, not only by instruction, but far more by its own social life. The only sort of society in which children can be fully members is a society of children. The vital matter here is that they should be members of a society possessing a real life of its own, for which the members know that they are responsible. The normal expression of this social life will be in games, of which the members of the school should be given full control. But there are many other forms of co-operation; for example, in the making of useful articles, where manual training is part of the course, as it always should be, children can work in groups and find an enjoyment in the product of their own group—an enjoyment which one disloyal member can entirely spoil. Book-work is bound to be mainly individualistic; productive work can be largely co-operative. We would emphasise the point that the aim here is not to reach independence, but fellowship and membership in a corporate life in which some

independence is an indispensable, but entirely secondary, element.¹

We have in England a traditional system of education which comes down to us (with modifications, no doubt) by a continuous history from the Middle Ages, and its chief representatives in England at the present time are, on the whole, those large private institutions which are called public schools, and the two older Universities. The first great mark of this type of education is that, whatever its theory may have been, in practice it is corporate. It has believed in educating people through influence rather than through instruction. Of course, it does not ignore instruction, but it does not put it in the first place. The instruments which for the most part this education has used have been literature and history. The aim has been to bring the student's mind into the closest possible contact with the greatest minds of the human race in all ages. It may, or may not, succeed in that aim. It may attempt it in the case of the

¹ Cf. the experiments of Kirchensteiner in Munich.

individual students who are particularly ill-suited for it; but that is its aim, and it is certainly not an ignoble aim. It supplies to those who have been able most to profit by it standards of judgment and criticism. This enables a man to stand apart from the tendencies of the moment and to pronounce judgment on them in the light of what has been best in human experience.

We are not concerned to defend the institutions which follow the principle of this tradition except so far as they do follow it. An educational apparatus which (as we are assured) leaves the leaders of the French and British Governments incapable of direct intercourse when they meet is too plainly an absurdity. Moreover, the ignorance of vital social matters, which is characteristic of our public-school products, is nothing less than a national peril. Yet the underlying principle of this type of education, namely, that membership in a corporate life is more important than anything else, is perfectly sound.

The great educational developments of the nineteenth century, culminating in the Act of 1870, were prevented alike by general social

conditions and by a false psychology from completely following the old tradition. They established a type of education which is predominantly individual rather than corporate, intellectual rather than spiritual, democratic rather than aristocratic ; it supplies people with knowledge of facts rather than with standards of judgment. It is individual rather than corporate, for it began to take possession of the world when the forces of progress were almost all of them strongly individualistic ; at that time the demand of democracy was for the abolition of privileges, the breaking down of class restrictions, and the insistence that the individual must be able to live his own life—with all of which we entirely agree, though we think it needs a good deal of supplementing ; and, consequently, its tendency has been to suggest to people that the aim of education is that they may get on in the world. The instrument which it has used has been for the most part instruction, and its appeal has been, not, as in the traditional system, to sympathy and imagination, but to intelligence and memory. In its own sphere it is far more effective than schools of the

older type. Moreover, in very many instances, and the number is growing, the elementary schools are developing a strong corporate sense, a true loyalty, though in this they are sadly hampered by conditions.

Our traditional method, then, is a training in "free membership" of a society, and this, so far as it goes, is just what we want. We need to be more efficient; but what we have in our English tradition is just what ought to be predominant. Our trouble has been that the lesson of "free membership" has been learnt in a society so narrow and exclusive that its principles have hardly been applied to membership of the nation or the Church, until the call of the war revealed the capacity for heroism and sacrifice which had actually been fostered by the training of the school.

We must, then, begin to apply, with whatever increase of intellectual efficiency, the principles of our traditional schools to the education of the people generally. To this end we need small classes, teachers with some leisure to develop interests of their own in companionship with their pupils, and playing-fields in the immediate neighbourhood of the school. It

will cost vast sums of money, but no national investment could be so remunerative. Again, it is not only the individual schools that must be such as to foster the social habit of mind ; the whole educational system must be planned with the same object. Here the vital matter is to secure that it suggests at every point the dedication of the powers which it develops to the service of the community and not of self. The " educational ladder " is utterly at fault in this respect. No doubt, if there is born to poor parents a child with the capacity to be a great artist or a great statesman, it is to the general advantage that this power should be developed and utilised. But if by education a child is lifted from one social stratum to another, with all the change of interests and tastes which this involves, that child is immediately tempted to look down on its own people. But if once the native sympathies are uprooted, it is hard to grow any more. The " educational ladder " is liable to produce successful self-seekers.

• The employment of competition within the system itself is up to a point inevitable and is probably harmless. Some one must be top

and someone must be bottom in this world, as far as success in any given effort is concerned ; and children may as well learn early to take the place which their gifts and industry win them—be it high or low—with good grace. Even form-prizes are probably harmless (as they are certainly useless), because, at least in a boys' "public school," the tradition is that no one should think about them.

But the pervading principle of the system as a whole should be co-operative, and suggest to those whom it influences that they are being trained for the community and not for themselves. It is sometimes said that we have already created a system by which every boy who has the capacity to profit by the highest education is able to obtain it. Possibly this is almost true so far as the educational system itself is concerned ; but general economic conditions lead parents to expect their children's earnings so soon as they are fourteen years old, and this tradition, having arisen in circumstances which justify it, has led to a similar expectation among parents who could very well afford to keep their children at

school ; in a vast number of families, however, this is economically almost impossible. It is certainly true that many children who would profit by higher education never receive it.

Quite apart, however, from such questions, the existing system is false in principle. It provides advanced education for those who win scholarships and exhibitions. Even if there are enough of these to provide for all who intellectually deserve them, the system is false because it suggests with enormous force that the individual child has won his chance by his own merits and is, therefore, at liberty to use it for his own advantage. In place of a system which selects some as privileged by competitive exhibitions we need a complete system of free, State-provided, though preferably not State-controlled, education which will at various stages hand over for technical training and a commencement in the work of life those who are not qualified to profit by continued general education beyond the stage then reached. Such a system would perpetually enforce the belief that the State trains us because it needs our fullest service, and the citizens would gradually come to feel

it a mere act of justice that they should use for the community the powers which the community had developed.

It would also have the great advantage of retaining within the influence of the educational system any who are by present standards judged unfit for higher teaching; for present standards, being those of the competitive examinations, are almost wholly intellectual. There are very many who, though not intellectually gifted, yet continue to gain great general benefit from school, and even University life, through the association with others more gifted than themselves which it brings. And, in any case, to turn out into the labour market with no special training a boy of thirteen or fourteen is to risk doing him direct moral injury. Just when his mind is beginning to be receptive of ideas, and just when his character most of all needs sympathetic guidance, he is exposed to chance influence and given the devil's own maxim that he must make his own way in the world. Even if further instruction is of comparatively little use to him, wise influence and appropriate environment are of the first importance.

CHAPTER X

FELLOWSHIP: THE TASK OF THE PRESENT GENERATION

THE argument of the preceding chapters naturally leads up to a demand for drastic changes in the social framework of the country, whether it be in the field of commerce and industry, or in that of education. But there is always a great danger that a demand for wide and far-reaching national changes should tend to shift the feeling of responsibility off individuals. If we are convinced that the State should impose through legislation a national minimum of wages, there is still the danger that we should be tempted to overlook the question of the payment of our typist or our charwoman. If we demand that the State should take an ever-increasing share of the surplus income of the nation, it is well to

remember that one obvious way of helping this on is to be ready ourselves voluntarily to surrender our own little surplus for communal purposes.

This neglect of immediate possibilities sometimes underlies schemes of educational reform. There is something pathetic in the eagerness with which idealists look to educational reform for the realisation of their hopes. If only we could mould the coming generation to our liking, we feel the thing were done,—whatever the thing we desire may be. Our enthusiasm for education is often the measure of our despair of ourselves. The modern cult of the child is not altogether healthy, especially in so far as it leads us to underrate alike the claims and the responsibility of the mature. If the world needs changing, we cannot leave the task simply to a better educated posterity. We must expect more from ourselves and our contemporaries. A reformed educational system would, in course of time, produce immense results; but the course of time will be deplorably long, and the results comparatively meagre, unless the will to change permeate the atmosphere alike of the home and of the

surrounding society. Indeed, no such development of education as we desire is possible without the initiative and approval of the present generation, and all such efforts will be rendered futile unless the world in which the new generation is to live is being radically altered into closer harmony with the principles we desire to instil. We must neither ignore the many efforts already put forth to create a better commonwealth, nor suppose that the men of to-day are incapable of further effort and advance.

The keynote of this book has been that a change of heart and of outlook is the necessary precondition of all far-reaching political and economic reform. Those who are immersed in the details of legislative reform are often apt to be somewhat contemptuous of the part which each individual can play by a reform of his own life. But for us this is the central part, if his life be taken to include his public and corporate as well as his private and family responsibilities. It is therefore only fitting that the last chapter should deal with the question of what we all individually can do so as to hasten the incoming of that revolution in the frame-

work of modern society which we believe to be essential.

Some advances towards a new social order may be discerned in changes of outlook and habit initiated by the war. It has brought to light the powers of sacrifice and of accommodation to new circumstances, which were latent in men and women whose minds and habits seemed formed and set beyond the possibility of change. The great catastrophe has to a vast extent broken up prejudices and conventions, even the social structure itself. There is a new opportunity for experiments in fellowship. The old moulds are broken ; we need not let them set in the same shapes again. Even men who for many years have worked under the old influences and traditions have found themselves unexpectedly looking at their profession or their business from a new point of view. It is possible now to capture, for the ideal of fellowship, the very pillars of the old system ; no doubt the substitution of the new for the old is in every case risky and adventurous ; but men have suddenly learnt again that adventure is the only life worth living.

It may be that the possibilities of a true commonwealth, revealed and in some part realised by the pressure of war, will fade from men's minds as the spur of peril is withdrawn. Yet we cannot but nurse a better hope. The youth of the present generation, having discovered in the hour of danger something of its capacity for brotherhood, might return to the paths of peace with the resolve to renew wholeheartedly those lines of social experiment and advance which received but listless support before the war. For it is now clear that the mistrust which divides capital and labour not only prejudices industry, by making it inefficient, but also robs work of its highest moral satisfaction through the want of a common interest, the absence of the spirit of fellowship. In the search after fellowship, many are now prepared to engage.

Fellowship must be practised first of all *in private life*. A change of heart expressing itself in small and apparently insignificant actions would soon alter the whole tone and colour of social relationships in the circle affected ; gradually the way to more important acts expressive of fellowship would be found,

and at any rate the social will would be strengthened against the relics of egoism. In the case especially of the middle and upper classes, such small acts as we have in mind would perhaps begin with personal expenditure; we should realise the inherent hatefulness of such expenditure as itself separates us from the great mass of our fellow citizens, instead of indulging in it just because it does mark us off. One advantage of such a voluntary limitation of income as has been suggested in a previous chapter, would be the automatic solution of this problem of unsocial expenditure, while any real reduction of false standards of living would tend to break down class barriers. After all, the association of fraternity with equality is not fortuitous. There must be some real expression of brotherhood in terms of a common standard of living and experience. The Christian will make it his aim to secure not indeed an exact but a substantial equality of possession. A genuinely inspired millionaire will almost certainly cease to be a millionaire.

A further expression of fellowship in private life may be found in cultivating the acquaintance of those who hold views which seem to us

erroneous and dangerous; we may come to regard those views more favourably or the other party may come to see where they are at fault; in any case, the bitterness due to mere misunderstanding would be removed. The war itself has occasioned many strange and unaccustomed friendships. It has thrown together men who were far enough apart before. All such personal links need to be conserved and fresh ones formed if we are to advance to a true commonwealth. In conversation, we should consistently avow our dislike of social arrangements which lead to estrangement and strife, our hope for better things, and our belief in human nature, and our own determination to risk something for that hope and belief. In all these ways, we shall make channels for the wholesome influences, and shall at least not quench the spirit. The day of small things must not be despised.

In business life, it seems at first sight difficult for the individual to effect much. Yet we can at least begin with a frank recognition of the defects of our present system. The competitive order of society creates grave

inequalities in the distribution of wealth, involves the exclusion of the large mass of the workers from an effective share in the management and control of industry, and is not inspired by any clear sense of public service in the conduct of business. In all these respects, it offends against our moral judgment. The socialist ideal of an industrial order in which all labour for the common good and not for private gain is simply Christian. The ideal of a society in which no one worked for private profit is not to be reached at a bound, but any developments which tend toward a more equal sharing of wealth produced, or towards giving the workers a voice in the control of production, or towards making industry more public-spirited, should make a direct appeal to an enlightened conscience. No doubt many schemes directed towards these ends will fail through short-sightedness or impatience, or through sheer lack of inadequate educational preparation. Progress will be slow and tentative, but while the millennium tarries, many individuals have a certain liberty of innovation in their own business, and some possess finer opportunities than they realise. A survey of

what has already been attempted and achieved in many firms would bring to light the endless possibilities of economic chivalry.¹ If it be true that the most conspicuous successes in the sphere of welfare work have taken place in firms which enjoyed economic advantages that sheltered them from the full pressure of competition, yet an enormous amount might be done to improve factory conditions, especially for women, if the matter were taken up wholeheartedly by employers' federations and associations, even in industries more exposed to the keenness of competition. Such a step, if taken on the employers' initiative, would of itself be a valuable contribution to fellowship. It would create an entirely new situation between capital and labour if the utmost possible were done voluntarily by employers who cared about these things and who recognised that such mitigations of evil conditions incidental to production were a clear debt of honour

¹ For a suggestive treatment of this subject in its widest bearings see an article by Alfred Marshall on the Social Possibilities of Economic Chivalry, in the *Economic Journal*, March 1907. See also articles in *Progress* published quarterly by British Institute for Social Service, from which also further information can be obtained.

and not a self-appointed and patronising charity.

It is even more important to emphasise the possibilities of co-operation between employers and employed, and to realise the contribution which the individual may make in the promotion of that basis of goodwill and understanding, without which no co-operation can succeed. While recognising the legitimacy of the strike as an ultimate weapon in the present methods of bargaining between capital and labour, the member of a Trade Union who believes in fellowship can at least throw his weight in the scale against a pagan faith in class-war and the natural man's liking to secure what he thinks to be his right by self-assertion rather than negotiation. Part of the conflict between capital and labour is inherent in the present system, but part is due to a misunderstanding of the economic structure and to false economic doctrines, such as the belief in a limited work fund or the belief in the labour theory of value, with the term "labour" interpreted often to mean wage earners only.¹ The Trade Unionist

¹ The policy of limiting output is justified in the minds of many workers by the almost instinctive and certainly mis-

who collects together his fellow workmen to study more carefully the economic framework of society can do much to promote a better spirit in society by helping to separate out false and true antagonisms between capital and labour, and to remove bitterness against persons.

Employers, on the other hand, must recognise that Trade Union policies which they resent as hampering efficient production and which they condemn as immoral are founded not exclusively on false economics, but on a distrust ingrained by generations of bitter experience. Ca' canny is the natural outcome of ruthless reductions of piece-rates carried out with a sole eye to profit and with no concern for the workers' interests. Employers must accept a principle of mutual responsibility and disown the view that their only or chief business is to make profits, if they are to do their part in overcoming antagonism.

There is further a great field for co-operation

taken belief that this limitation leaves more work to be done by others. The truism that labour is the source of wealth is often turned into a falsehood by denying the productivity of capital and by ignoring forms of labour other than that represented by the Labour movement.

between master and men in helping to put an end to blind alleys for boy labour and in promoting continued higher education both of boys and girls and of adults. The Kirchner system, referred to in a previous chapter, presupposes the co-operation of employers, Trade Unions, and municipal authorities. If such a movement is possible in Germany where class-bitterness is extreme, it ought not to be difficult in England. Again, Trade Unions could, if they wished, discriminate between employers, and give their confidence to employers of genuine social sympathies and true public spirit.¹

Among employers, there is even greater need of men who, believing in persuasion, will distrust dictation. The will to "boss," though not confined to any one section of society, is specially characteristic of the employing-class. The employers who appreciate the true dignity of labour will be anxious to carry further the devolution of responsibility, especially in details of management, and in the maintenance

¹ The proposals in this direction made by Sir Charles Booth deserve more careful consideration than they have yet received.

of discipline within their works. Those who exercise control over men in industry might adopt the principle of never imposing a rule without first discussing it with the men affected by it. A series of experiments should be set on foot by which employees were more and more fully consulted in the government of the concern they served. Autonomy might be gradually extended as the men developed powers of initiative and organising skill. This would not mean that industry could dispense with leadership, but that leadership would become constitutional instead of autocratic.

Amongst Church members such new standards of consideration of the rights of personality might and should be made the real and effective standards of Christian conduct, so that the public opinion of Christian circles would confirm those ready to adopt them, and help to bring up the unwilling and the laggard.

There is a real parallel at this point between industrial and political organisation. The argument for retaining all political power in the hands of the few has always been based

on the ignorance and incompetence of the masses. The democrat may parry this argument by pointing out that every class is unfit to govern. "Education, intelligence, wealth are a security against certain faults of conduct, not against errors of policy. There is no error so monstrous that it fails to find defenders among the ablest men." It is curious that the old argument for aristocracy, for dictatorships and irresponsible expert authority, should be revived at the very moment when Europe is reaping to the full the disastrous consequences of Bismarck's triumph over representative government in 1866. But the democratic faith does not stand or fall with a *tu-quoque* reference to the prejudice and incompetence of the classes. The extension of the franchise is "not the realisation of a political ideal: it is the discharge of a moral obligation." The plea for democratic control alike in industry and in politics is based on the belief that a share in the responsibility of government is essential to true manhood and the good life. This belief has been fostered primarily by Athenian democracy and the Christian Church. It cannot be surrendered with-

out surrendering the Christian ideal of character.

As we have already hinted, the practical difficulties in the way of the kind of advance we desire will be great, and will seem to many insuperable at the present time. It is quite intelligible that employers who recognise how unsatisfactory is the position assigned to the worker in our existing system of industry will yet question the practicability of any further democratisation of industry because they are so convinced of the ignorance and incompetence of the masses. If the conviction be genuine, then such a man will find the best expression for his sympathy by giving active support to a strong educational policy, such as we have been advocating. If the main hindrance is really ignorance, then on no account must national education be starved: it must be improved and extended. But it is as well to remember that it is not possible to educate up to the point where experiments in popular responsibility become safe. The experiments must be tried while they are risky, as they are a necessary part of the educative process.

The risks attaching to these experiments are due to the pressure of competition. Modern industry requires a strong executive, with powers of rapid decision. Democratic methods are notoriously dilatory. For this reason, many desire an extension of military discipline in industry rather than an approach to constitutional government. And others who genuinely care about democracy do not see how it is to be introduced under competitive conditions. Some leaders of industry feel that they could overcome the antagonism between capital and labour by taking their men into their confidence, if it were not for the bitter rivalry of other firms. It is competition itself which blocks the way to these developments. Such risks are doubtless real, though those who are conscious of them may be under-rating the advantages they would secure in the competitive struggle itself by making the democratic appeal to their employees. There is, incidentally, the probability that employers who frankly recognised the worth of Trade Unions, and the importance of their aims, would secure advantages by a modification in the attitude of Trade Unions

towards themselves. Moreover, it is clear that the risks are slightest and the gains greatest in the first steps of any such movement, namely, the consulting of employees on matters of discipline, and detailed arrangements in particular departments. And even the fullest development of democratic control in industry would have to recognise the necessity of entrusting large executive powers to industrial leaders. However, it is unlikely that we shall see any considerable advance in this direction so long as the appeal continues to be made to the competitive motive with anything like its present strength. Our hope must lie in replacing the spur of competition by the desire to serve the community. For it is clear that, even if we had a better distribution of wealth and something in the nature of Guild Socialism at work, the remedying of these two defects in competitive industry would not of itself give us a social ideal any more than the extension of the franchise forms in itself the realisation of a political ideal. An increase in wealth and in responsibility might take place without an increase in public spirit.

Yet the last is the greatest of the three, and without it the other two are imperfect and even dangerous. But if we cared enough about it, we can take steps even now to give fuller expression to public spirit. At present, for example, the great co-operative movement spends about 2 per cent. of its profits on education. Members of that movement who believe in the ideals from which it sprang might agitate for the setting aside of a larger proportion of the wealth of the movement to public ends. Somewhat similarly shareholders with moral courage could see to it that great surplus profits were used, not to build up strong reserves merely, or to facilitate the watering of capital, or to inflate the value of their shares, but to ensure good conditions of labour in their particular businesses and to promote the good of the commonweal. Such an enunciation of a higher standard for business generally would not be popular, but a genuine public spirit must not be dependent on praise, and the further development of such a spirit is the most fundamental change required in industry. In any case,

the broad nature of the task in business is not incapable of definition, and if the ultimate goal is yet far off, there are immediate changes of attitude and immediate practical steps which employers and employed alike can enter upon, and only such efforts towards an ideal fellowship in business will cut at the root of the bitterness of feeling between capital and labour.

In regard to *the making of public opinion*, those who share our hope must criticise and seek to reform our social and industrial arrangements in the light of fundamental moral principles, believing that practical difficulties can always be overcome by wisdom, faith and patience. Thus, for example, if it be true that responsibility can never be rightly apportioned in a joint stock company, such an association is immoral in principle, and must be replaced by something free from this objection. A similar argument must be applied to the whole capitalist domination of industry to which we have already referred, or to an arrangement by which the receivers of the chief profits are set free for a life of "leisure,"

while control is in the hands of a salaried manager whose first duty is, not to those whom he controls, but to his own employer.

It is not only arrangements within the industrial world which must be brought under the criticism of the Christian conscience. Our habitual attitude to the State and to the acquisition of wealth must be similarly criticised. We are liable to regard the State as an alien authority vexatiously interfering in our concerns; only in war do people willingly pay taxes, because only then do they feel that the State is carrying out their will. But the State is the expression and organ of our national fellowship, and distrust of the State is rooted in our failure to appreciate that fellowship. If we were conscious of a real unity of interest with our fellow-citizens, we should first make the State really representative of that common interest, and should welcome its action as maintaining it. Perhaps, however, such a sense of common interest in time of peace is unattainable so long as the acquisition of wealth occupies its present place in the common estimation. A new public opinion, free from the love of

money, sustained by real fellowship between all sections, and prepared to regard the State as the organ of that fellowship, must be the aim which in thought, speech, and act we endeavour to promote.

Private adventures and experiments will gradually show the way for the removal of undesirable or ineffective methods of State-organisation and control, and the activity of thought prompted by the moral criticism of existing usages will lead to a public opinion capable of new kinds of political action. It is, however, especially important in this connection to bear in mind that only a right spirit in individuals, beginning with the few and spreading to the many, can either lead to or give proper effect to wise official action. A harsh law, or a good law harshly applied, may be the result of a class-struggle on the old lines; wise laws wisely applied can only be won by a change of attitude towards the State coupled with a higher standard of civil knowledge. We are still far from this.

The mere existence of the police force, for example, and still more the fact that many

people regard it as the normal symbol of the State, is evidence enough that human society has not actually achieved fellowship; some of us at most times, and all of us at some times, need to be restrained from violating the most elementary principles of social fellowship by appeals to the purely selfish emotion of fear. And existing economic arrangements perpetuate the practical denial of fellowship. Our first need, then, is to realise all sorts of fellowship, so that in the groups thus constituted common policies may be worked out with mutual trust. But fellowship is not a principle that can be followed piecemeal. The admission of sheer selfishness, individual or corporate, at any point, will vitiate the whole life.

The war has created much fellowship within England. But unless we can apply this principle in all relations, it will dwindle away when the urgency is passed. Beyond the boundaries of our own nation and empire, we must aim at a true fellowship of nations, and for this purpose it will not be sufficient, to map out their spheres of colonial expansion, and so prevent collision, but we need also the

frank acceptance of common principles and common aims.

In his "Reflections and Reminiscences," Bismarck includes some letters which passed in 1857 between him and Gerlach,—a conservative Prussian statesman of the old school. The main point of interest in the correspondence is the contrast between the confidence of Bismarck in "exclusive devotion to king and country" as a guide for diplomacy, and Gerlach's conviction that the recognition of some principle such as opposition to the revolution is necessary to sound statesmanship. Gerlach claims that throughout the Middle Ages European politics were concerned with the spread of the Christian Church, but since the Reformation "there has no longer been one universal principle in Christendom. Of the original principle, there remained only resistance to the dangerous power of the Turks . . . and, had people been loyal to that principle, namely, the destruction of the Turkish Empire, Europe or Christendom would, humanly speaking, have been in a better position with regard to the East than at present, when we are threatened on that side with the greatest

dangers.”¹ To Bismarck, this attitude seemed old-fashioned and doctrinaire, yet, however inadequate or mistaken the principles proposed by Gerlach may have been, history has justified his insistence on the necessity of principle. There is no hope for a united Europe or a lasting peace so long as exclusive devotion to national interests or national security is the accepted standard of statesmanship. Unless the States of Europe can agree on some common task and on the methods by which such common task is to be carried out, there will be no permanent improvement in international relationships. And it is hardly necessary to add that the task and the methods of its discharge must be defined in accord with the Christian ideal. Perhaps the main questions emerge in considering the relations of Europe to Asia and Africa. Can the nations of Europe agree not to seek monopoly advantages for their own subjects in the exploitation of backward peoples? Can they agree as to the standard of European responsibility towards native races? Can they accept as a common aim in the administration of dependencies the furthering

¹ “Bismarck,” Vol. I, p. 181.

of the interests of the inhabitants of those dependencies and the preparation of them for a self-governing life? Only on some such lines can the nations of Europe achieve fellowship and, incidentally, secure peace.

* * * * *

In this world, which needs fellowship even more than it seeks it, stands the Christian Church, which is itself in its true nature the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. What men could not do for themselves, Christ accomplished for them. Those who really submitted to His Will found themselves actually linked to one another in the unity of that submission. They might still be only partially purged of their own selfish lusts and ambitions: yet they knew that in Him they were one. In the early church, this unity was real, for it brought together master and slave, the learned and the unlearned, men who differed in race and in temperament. It was a fellowship of the Holy Spirit, both because it fostered and strengthened all holy desires, and because it came from Heaven and not from men.

In all groups and movements in which there has been any measure of true Christian life,

will be found these characteristics,—a fellowship which transcends conventional social barriers, a quickening of higher aspirations, and a sense that the common life derives from God. Yet we are conscious that no group and no movement offers an adequate realisation of the fellowship of the Spirit. Some elements of distortion and of failure are revealed in every organised expression of Christian life. We yearn for something deeper and fuller. And this discontent is Divine, for never is the Church less Christian than when she is most self-satisfied. If the Church were true to her own nature, she would always be the home of ideals which are as yet beyond the reach of practice, since by penitence and prayer she presses beyond the stage of actual attainment, and in her faith she has the substance of things hoped for. The Church should be a very network of fellowships between people of different classes and opinions who, being united in common friendship, will think and pray together about the things which tend to divide them.

The Christian Church, then, stands for an ideal of fellowship which is ignored and indeed

denied and violated by the competitive system of industry and the existing social order. If she be true to herself, the Church must proclaim her standard, and make men uncomfortable concerning the plain contradictions that subsist between our political and industrial life on the one hand, and our religious and moral ideal on the other. If the Church has been half-hearted and faltering in her witness, it is due to the fact that she is the captive city of God. In some countries the Church has been made the bulwark of reaction, and in all countries her insight and courage are apt to fail, both through entanglement with vested interests, and acceptance of false philosophies. The claims of Christian idealism have been whittled down either by assuming the truth of the view that the enlightened pursuit of self-interest promotes the common weal, so that nothing more is required of men, or by regarding this world as run on unalterable principles of its own, and relegating the realisation of a Christian society to a future life. This false other-worldliness rests incidentally and in part on the habit of talking of another world, instead of the age to come. And even if it

should be true that the final triumph of love is not to take place on this earth, it is none the less true that only as we strive to realise fellowship here and now, shall we ever be able to appreciate it elsewhere and hereafter. Moreover, to believe that men are condemned for ever to work under a competitive system which thwarts brotherhood, is really a refusal to believe in redemption. Nothing contrary to the mind of Christ has any claim to permanence on God's earth.

The first duty of the Church will be to hold up her moral ideal, to impress upon succeeding generations of her sons and daughters the conviction that the world of competition as we know it is one that is to be turned upside down by the operation of the Spirit of Christ through His disciples in business life. Let the Church impress upon those who have any leisure or capacity for it the responsibility which lies upon them to acquire training in the facts of social life, the incidence of its hardships, the methods of its working, and the means of its control. Let her create that atmosphere of high expectation from which individuals will draw the courage to make

very definite endeavours to express the ideal of fellowship in some realm of industrial or commercial life. Above all, let her continue to be the home of an actual fellowship of hope and prayer, in which men and women of diverse experience can meet and hold together even when they cannot agree ; let this fellowship flow over the barriers which at present divide her members politically as well as spiritually ; let her bring to men the spirit of sweet reasonableness, the will to understand, patience, frankness, and love.

The task of social reconstruction which lies before us is so vast and so difficult that courage will often fail, faith may turn to cynicism before it ends in sight, and the love of many will wax cold. If we are not to fail, we need the Church as the source of undying fellowship. But if the Church is to be the home of fellowship for worldly matters, she must have done with intolerance in spiritual matters. While her various sections regard one another with any trace of envy or contempt, her power to be the realised life of fellowship is ruined ; and therewith the hope of the world is ruined too. The Christian Church has the

key. At present she uses it to lock herself and all the world with her out of the Kingdom of God. But if she will let her own spirit govern her action, which will thereupon be a united action for God and mankind, she will at once show in herself the fruits of that spirit which are love and joy and peace, and will deliver the world from the flesh which is self, and whose fruits are enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions. Then will be made known the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth justice.



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